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What My Religion Means to Me

J. EDGAR PARK

OUSPENSKY in one of his books uses this interesting illustration. He asks you to picture to yourself a small bug crawling over a white sheet of paper. This bug is only able to move its head from side to side. It is not able to raise its head up from the paper. In other words, it is a two dimensional bug. Its whole world is a flat surface, it knows length and breadth but does not know anything about height. It has no idea that there is another dimension which rises above the surface of the paper. All it knows is certain marks and shapes on the sheet of paper.

Now this bug comes again and again on a curious phenomenon. He finds five forms or obstacles to his progress on the paper. There are always five of them, the little bug notices, as he crawls around them. There is a large oval form to the left, low down, then three smaller oval forms higher up, and then to the extreme right, and smallest of all, still another oval form.

You can imagine the bug's theories and ideas about this curious phenomenon. Why are there always five? Why is the one to the left always larger and lower down? Why is the fifth always the smallest and always to the extreme right? You can imagine in the learned Universities of Bugland many a thesis equipped with footnotes to explain the "Five-form Phenomenon," suggesting with much erudition possible explanations of this strange appearance. But because the bug knew only two dimensions and could not raise his head he could have no idea that these five forms were the fingers of a man's right hand. Think how far away from the truth all the theories and hypotheses of the bugs would be, the truth that these forms were the fingers of a hand, connected in a plane they know nothing about into a human hand, connected by nerves and muscles with a body, with a brain, with memory, human history, human aspiration and desire and all the unseen riches of man's imagination and music and art and philosophy!

In talking about religion we are all like the bug noticing certain things

which meet us on the planes of our existence, isolated phenomena, and we are wondering if there is a common explanation of them all. But the cause and full meaning of them seems to lie outside of our sphere of direct knowledge. So we may be just as wrong as the bug was. Yet it was something for the bug to have noticed that there were always five of these forms, that they came always together, that some were larger than others, and that their relative positions were approximately the same.

We can at least do this, and perhaps go further in imagining an explanation of our religious experiences which may be not altogether false.

If I try to discover in my own life the religious patches, I have first of all to exclude some things which may have some faint historical connection with religion but which my better judgment tells me are to-day really only relics of superstition or tricks of the trade of living, like knocking on wood, or clapping people on the back and telling them to cheer up, or comforting myself in misfortune by saying, "It was to be!" or the feeling that God owes me something for my subscription to the Community Chest, or that he will remember and reward me for the winter night I got out of bed to say my forgotten prayers on the cold floor.

When I try to exclude such religious frivolities I find that there are four religious patches in my life. In fact, I would say that there are only four great religious sects in the world according as people concentrate on one or other of these four patches.

These four can be illustrated by four verses in the Bible, for the popularity of the Bible is largely due to the fact that it contains traces of all religions and most paganisms.

The four texts from the Bible are these—

1. "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." Psalm 23. 1.
2. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." Matthew 6. 9.
3. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1. 27.
4. "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" Psalm 8. 4.

First, "The Lord is my shepherd," a sense of the mystical personal

guidance and care of the Great Spirit, a lone soul in a little boat in the Mediterranean, whispering to himself:

"So long thy power hath led me,
Sure it still will lead me on!"

Second, "Our Father, who art in heaven," a fellowship with all men in reverence for the majesty of, and obedience to, the spirit of the unseen Father. And of that sense you can have no doubt if you have ever been a member of a great Presbyterian congregation in Scotland when the minister has announced, "Let us join in singing Psalm one hundred, the old hundredth!" and you have felt the crowd leap to the testimony with the thunder of

"All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,
Come ye before him and rejoice."

The *third*, "visiting widows in their affliction," is the ethical culture patch, the religion of social service, for one of Ebenezer Elliott's "Corn Law Rhymes" has actually strayed into our hymn books, and Ebenezer must gaze from another world with a rather indignant astonishment at respectable comfortable congregations rising at least to hear the choir sing to them his battle hymn

"When wilt thou save the people?
O God of mercy, when?
The people, Lord, the people,
Not thrones and crowns, but men;
Flowers of thy heart, O God, are they,
Let them not pass like weeds away,
Their heritage a sunless day:
God save the people!"

And the *fourth* religious patch, "What is man?", is the region of curiosity and speculation about man's place in the cosmos, his relation to his world, to the past, and to the future. We see the philosopher and the scientist at work trying to understand. The scientist has in the back of his mind his simple faith, "This world is a work of reason"—and the philosopher looks up from his desk and adds, "Yes, and it must be interpreted as we interpret the actions of a man, by its motives."

I make the guess that these four patches are the impress on my life of some great power whose influence on me I feel as religion.

(1) The personal mystical "The Lord is my Shepherd" patch of religion is what I would call the mental hygiene aspect of religion. There are certain mental laws in the universe which if you obey them seem to keep your mind in a healthy and efficient condition. The gulf stream will flow through a straw, if you turn the straw the right way. The beginning of religion for a great many people is the recognition of these forces or principles of mental hygiene.

I do not think when Newman was crouching in his boat that above him somewhere the creator of the universe with his full attention focused on Newman was engaged in changing things around so as to make things clearer and easier for him in his distress. But I do think, without any question, that in so far as Newman was able to bring the straw of his mind into the line of the perpetually flowing current which runs through the universe, in so far as his mind was cleared up, his best way was made plain to him.

In other words, in this religious patch I am inclined to admire the word "demonstrating" which is used by Christian Scientists. What you are doing in much of your prayer is not asking for special privilege or favors or even attention. You are striving to bring your mind into connection with a well-known force, you are organizing your inner life. An organized inner life is prayer, an unorganized inner life is worry. It is fine if you can picture the power as *Thy* power, the care as that of "*My Shepherd*," but the essential part of the process is that you should have the faith of the physical scientist that you are a part of a consistent universe which treats you as if you were an adult, and that if you do your part in it the universe will respond by doing its part. If you find those laws of sincerity, faith, truth and persistent and exhaustive effort on which the universe runs, then your mind becomes a part of the system and you operate successfully. It is said, "That is nothing but self-suggestion"—well, you have to suggest something to yourself otherwise you will never take a first step anywhere. This patch of religion is suggesting to yourself those laws as applying to you which seem to apply elsewhere—that if you do not get scared and panicky, if you try to understand all sides of the situation confronting you, if you do the very best you can by utmost effort to help yourself, then the rest of the responsibility does not rest on you, you are in

the hands of a power greater than yourself and which ultimate results may show is worthy of your trust.

(2) The second patch, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," the Scotch congregation singing "All people that on earth do dwell," goes far beyond this initial experience of religion. It is when groups of people come together interested in the attainment of some end for which they have exerted themselves to the utmost, in which they are striving to sink their own selfish interests, and which they all feel is beyond their unaided strength to attain—that you have the flowering of community worship and the dawning upon them together of a faith in a spirit in the human race which is not the power or plan of any individual man. It is a power which commands reverence and awe and obedience. This faith in "Our Father, who art in heaven"—this sense that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"—is partly born out of a sense of the historical guidance of the race,

"O God of Bethel, by whose hands
Thy people still are fed,
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led,"

partly from the personal mystical experiences of the worshipers, partly from a communal sense of need and helplessness in the face of great aspirations or trials.

It has the extraordinary result that often the center of interest ceases to be the self and its problems, and the congregation is together able to arrive at the state of mind only possible to solitary saints of extraordinary holiness—"Not my will, but thine be done." Out of the disappearance of any insistence upon personal happiness and the perpetuation of one's own life is born in all such groups this enthusiasm for a cause greater than the individual and in religious groups for the victorious will of one greater even than the race and wiser and better than us all, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

(3) The third patch of religion is that of ethical culture and social service. In many cases it is the fruit of the other two, as has been said, "More good has been done in the world by those who set out to love God than by those who set out to love man."

But this is not always so. In moments of extreme practicality we are all inclined to agree with Saint James, even omitting his reference to "God

and the Father," and to believe that if people would only agree that religion is simply the art of being kind it would be a much better world to live in. Unfortunately or fortunately these other marks do remain on our plane of living and we must recognize them. More normally we all at times recognize that social service and ethical culture are the fruits of religion when religion is wholesome in its nature. Any mystical vision which lacks the social reference is suspect.

Samuel Butler's remark about a certain gentleman being "A good man in the worst sense of that term" is criticism enough of all types of piety and personal character which do not issue in lovable characteristics, in a passion for social justice, and in an unselfish devotion to the destruction of the unfair special privileges on which we ourselves have prospered. In fact, it is fair to say of mystical religion that it is only when you begin to treat all men as if they were your brothers that the universe begins to treat you as if it were your father.

The object of real mystical devotion can be reached not so much primarily by loyalty to a lonely individual God or a doctrinal trinity, as to a Kingdom of Heaven, a society of persons each working for the good of all till they arrive ultimately at the discovery that the universe itself is at heart so directed as to be sympathetic with such an enterprise.

(4) As real a part of religion as any of these is that part where you try to answer for yourself such questions, "If there is a god why doesn't he do something?" "What is the relation between the good spirit in man and the spirit which rules in nature?" the philosophic patch of religion in us all. I believe that we all should keep as parts of our religious life the practice of mental hygiene, the common worship with our fellows, the battle for social justice and the attempt to understand man's place in the cosmos.

One great writer said that at the moment when God rested on the seventh day of creation and pronounced all things very good, at that moment God became the devil. Without going so far as that I do think that when the writer of that chapter of Genesis penned this complacent self-congratulation on the part of God he laid himself open to a great deal of misunderstanding. In my religious thinking I find most help in the idea that nothing is finished and very good—that we are not viewing a tableau, but that we are in a process, that everything is still very imperfect, but that we have been let in to help in the process of cleaning things up

and making things better. In this we are assisting a spirit who is engaged in us and with us in the task of some great achievement of which we can only discern the next duty to be fulfilled but not the ultimate end.

If we could freely lift our heads for a moment into another plane, my guess would be that we would find that the four patches of religion can be unified and would lead up and into the mind and heart of one being who is consistent rather than capricious, whose farsighted wisdom is more kin to the prophetic artist than to the blue-print mechanic, whose love and goodness have the heroic rather than the mawkish cast, and whose scheme of operations would command our hearty respect.

And I believe it is given to some men of virtuous, honorable and intense spiritual vitality, at times, to lift their heads slightly from the plane in which we live, and experience actual communion with this great spirit. The experience of such communion cannot be transferred to others, but is shared by many of us when we find even when we are most alone the prison-like solitariness of our inner lives enlivened and purified by the presence in us of admirable company.

Whither Liberalism?

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS

ONE trouble in writing this article has been to find a name for it. Something might be done with Ichabod—"Where is the glory?"—but "Ichabod" is more useful for an epitaph than a title. If one should call it "An Examination of the Gains and Losses of Liberalism During the Last Seventy-Five Years With Some Reference to the Disfavor Into Which It Has Now Fallen," the general designation would be accurate. But no editor would allow so presumptuous a title to pass uncensored.

I doubt if anyone can document the first use of "Liberalism" with a capital L. It is not in the index of Sir Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. No history of nineteenth-century thought can leave it out. Whether the histories of twentieth-century thought will do more than describe its last illness and decent burial attended by a few senescent mourners remains to be seen. It has never been any one thing, least of all a program; it has been a many-sided attitude of the European and American mind. John Morley, than whom no one nurtured in and by it more completely and courageously lived it out, has seized and set out its definitive qualities.¹ "Alike," he says, "with those who adore it and those who detest it, the dominating force in the living mind of Europe [and America] after the overthrow of the French Monarch in 1830 has been the marked way of looking at things, feeling them, handling them, judging main actors in them, for which with a hundred kaleidoscopic turns, the accepted name is Liberalism. . . . Respect for the dignity and worth of the individual is its root. It stands for pursuit of social good against class interest or dynastic interest. It stands for the subjection to human judgment of all claims of external authority, whether in an established church or in more loosely gathered societies of believers, or in books held sacred."

It was the creative way in which the then "living mind of Europe" dealt with a dissolving scene. There was "a breaking up of ancient social and natural bonds and a blind groping toward some more cosmopolitan creed and some deeper satisfaction for the emotional needs of mankind."

¹ Hobhouse has considered it at length.

Religion shared the strain. There were only two ways to meet a situation like that—one to dam the flowing tide, the other to release the inquiring mind. Liberalism released the inquiring mind.

The two outstanding forms of Liberalism have, of course, been political and religious. They never made an open covenant or a secret agreement, but they have worked together through unescapable necessities. Political Liberalism has generally had the support of religious Liberalism. Its social programs have been deeply in debt to liberal religious idealism; the religious Liberal has depended, perhaps, too much upon direct liberal political action. At any rate the two wings of the liberal forces did between them write outstanding chapters in sixty epochal years of history. And the book is not yet finished.

I

Inherited religion had begun to feel, by 1860, the difficult estate of many of its positions. The structure of a new thought world was rising all about it, but there was as yet no keystone for the arches to lock up on. Charles Darwin furnished that. Evolution became not so much a keystone as a ruling idea beneath whose sovereignty the entire realm of human knowledge began to be reorganized. Inherited religion took the shock of it first in its cosmology, and it would be threshing much-flailed straw to consider that engagement. There was, to begin with, a natural and bitter protest. Whether these first protestants were most concerned for inerrant Scriptures, for God or the imperiled dignity of human nature—since a Bishop on first impulse is almost sure to protest the imputation of a simian ancestry—it is not now easy to say.

Followed a period of ingenuous reconciliation between Genesis and Evolution. Followed next a lyric period in which men like John Fiske and Lyman Abbott (in America) made noble theistic music of it all. They found it easy to fit the conception of an immanent God into the spacious framework of evolution. What else, said Abbott, was evolution but the beautiful and awesome process of the immanent God—the way God worked? Man made a rose of wax or paper, God grew a rose—so much the more God He.

Those of us who found both our faith and our freedom under such teachers will remember how our horizons widened and our spirits exulted. The morning stars sang together and we heard their music. The men who

led these celestial choirs were already grounded in a Christian theism, saturated in the prophets, the poets and the Sermon on the Mount. They had the gift of noble diction, they thought in ample regions, they had a way of saying great things simply. They believed a Divine Purpose ruled the conian sequence which began with a nebula and had issued in their secure and sunlit world. Their New Year's bells rang out the thousand years of wars, rang in the thousand years of peace. They heard a deeper voice across the storm:

"One God, one law, one element
And one far off Divine Event
Toward which the whole creation moves."

They believed, in fact, that we had substantially reached it. Democracy was triumphant, science a more than fairy god-mother. It was the best of all possible worlds, the golden age of Liberalism. The Second Law of Thermodynamics cast no shadow across it.

I think myself, though doubtless I am both dated and prejudiced, that Fiske, Abbott, Gladden, Drummond and the rest took the only line which has actual religious value with an insight and intellectual honesty for which they do not now always receive a deserved recognition. One of the Upanishads warns the curious to stop asking questions before their heads fall off. These men stopped in the presence of God, not the subjective God of later speculation evolved out of the inner consciousness, but before that persuasion of a Divine-Otherness around which in one form or another religion has organized itself from its dimmest beginnings. They were not blind to the difficulties involved—but they had steadfast minds and a sovereign faith. There was for a period a really marvelous resolution of religious perplexities. Christian faith for the first time in its history—at least since its first three centuries—was free, fearless and nobly intelligent. No wonder the morning stars sang together.

II

The critical evaluation of the Old and New Testaments in which Liberalism took the lead was a heated action while it lasted. The shouting and the tumult have not entirely died but it would be difficult now to make a *causa belli* out of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Some running controversies still go on, very much like the fighting in which Italian Condottieri became so expert that after a long day of it nobody was even

wounded. That is, as far as the Old Testament is concerned. How far the far more strategic critical evaluation of the New Testament has affected the general Christian mind is more obscure. The really significant issue of this movement for Protestantism has not been "J" and "E," the Deuteronomists, two Isaiahs, "Q" or Ur-Mark; it has been the dissolution of authority, or else a new and far more subtle definition of it. Liberalism to begin with substituted the inquiring mind for tradition and dogma. It acknowledges no authority in any region save the consensus of the wisest opinion and the demonstration of fact and experience, and it holds this open to constant revision.

It believes we can discover this authority through asking and obeying, here a little and there a little. It does not believe it can be put into a book or set upon a throne; it knows the foregrounds between us and it are full of the shifting play of experimental thought and life; it knows that such authority is always needing to be recast and redefined. And it asks no more than to adventure toward the truth. But once the literal authority of the Bible was gone, Protestantism was committed to confusing quests.

It was not difficult for earlier religious Liberalism to fit Jesus into an ascending scale of divine self-revelation and leave him there at the peak of it, unique, lonely and radiantly idealized. As other inspired and infallible authorities grew remote and were heard but faintly, his authority in morals and religious insight gathered power, became—to change the figure—the sheet anchor of religious Liberalism where every other anchor began to drag. All this and its effect upon liberal preaching need no amplification. Perhaps the degree to which this too has given away among many of the younger men puzzles us of an older generation more than almost anything else. We were and are so sure of it.

I venture to believe that the most signal accomplishment of liberal scholarship in the last twenty years is to have finally related primitive Christianity to its environment and to have traced its main tributaries to their sources. It is now "placed" in the long procession of religions with reasonable finality though very likely the general religious mind has been even less modified by this than by New Testament criticism—which is saying a good deal. The attitudes of the various denominations toward the laymen's missionary report is perhaps as good a test as any by which to measure the influence of liberal scholarship in the field of comparative religion upon the contemporary Christian mind.

III

The liberal mind has been consistently social; on the whole the social gospel is for American Protestantism the contribution of Liberalism. Our fundamental and evangelistically minded brethren have maintained rather acidly that we had nothing else to preach and there has been truth enough in their judgments to give them an edge. But not the whole truth. Liberalism moved from the doctrinal periphery of Christianity to its ethical center and that movement was far more than intellectual escape. The implicit and irreconcilable contradictions between the mind and the way and the truth of Jesus Christ and the mind and the way and the essential unverity, by any test that may be applied, of the economic and national will-to-power motivation of Western civilization has for two long generations now found an increasingly tragic demonstration. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

If "the historian of the future" should maintain that Christianity had by the end of the nineteenth century either grown socially sterile or had little power of any consequence over the actual driving forces of its contemporaneous civilization, he could, I think, make out a disconcerting case. Liberalism felt that if this indictment were true it was the fault of Christians and not of their religion. There was, it maintained, in Christianity an undeveloped social power. It had little interest in an eschatological kingdom of God since the world, it believed, was destined to run its astronomical course. It charged the conception of the realm of God with new meanings for this present world and set out to secure a Christian social order. How all this was preached and prayed for and who began it and how it has written its creeds and created its hymns and litanies is a matter of record—a proud record.

Both political and religious Liberalism staked everything on education; if a disciplined intelligence is man's only dependable instrument, then he must get himself a disciplined intelligence. After that everything else would be a detail. Religious Liberalism went further here than politics; politicians still had evangelists and revival meetings and believed in sudden conversion. Religious liberals did none of these things. They worked hand and glove with the psychologists and substituted the "psychological man" for Adam Smith's "economic man" and theology's "fallen man." Their creation creaked a little but he seemed all there.

The earlier relations of psychology, thus appealed to, and religion were a good deal like Siva; they both created and destroyed. Personality came, a detachable soul went; conversion, being diagramed, lost its mystic wonder and Christian nurture took its place. A matted growth of very old roots was discovered below original sin and a new light cast upon the complexities of human nature—which was, Liberalism believed, far too complex for inherited theological formulæ. And yet it undertook to resolve all these complexities by very simple formulæ of its own. The result has certainly not as yet in any field been what the Liberal hoped for. Perhaps his formula was also too simple.

IV

HAVING done all this Liberalism is now in distress. The younger religious leaders of an open inquiring mind have passed beyond it into something for which they have not yet found a name—something, they hold, of a far more radical character. The Fundamentalist says it has dissolved, as far as it could, the inherited Christian faith and left nothing in its place. The disillusioned say it has fulfilled few of its promises. The Institutionalist says he can not make an institution out of it. The Fascist says liberty is a lying watchword on any banner. Its last phase is embattled, not as attack is embattled, with brave hope and singing courage, but as a rear-guard action is carried on. Why all this has happened is worthy of our consideration.

There should be at least four reasons, of which, as far as religion goes, the first is the most vital. During its first period it still carried with it, as we have seen, the essentials of a glowing religious faith, though it was living more largely than it knew, or at least confessed, upon its inheritance. Then this glowing religious confidence felt the first cold breath of winds from unsunned spaces. The vast divergence between the more recent implications of science and all the supporting structure of religion began to be apparent. The inherited Christian conception of God was fitted to an inherited universe. Working belief in prayer, in Providence, in the order and sequence of earth-things as divinely ruled and the direction of the whole current of occurrence toward a victorious moral issue and the glory of God, all locked up together on the conception of a universe mobile enough for God to govern and limited enough for him to transcend.

It was an affair with the imagination as much as anything else. Im-

agination had long before given up the hope of picturing God. Religion was more dependent than it knew upon placing him. If he was Somewhat he must be *somewhere*. Lengthening time made no great difference, for God was the Eternal, but expanding space made any amount of difference, though God was also the Infinite. I should think inherited faith in God took from astronomy, which had been since Job and Isaiah the starlit ally of theistic faith, its deepest spear-thrust. Even the rationalistic eighteenth century could still sing, "The hand that made us is divine." Now God began to be lost in his universe and prayer and praise doubt-haunted in a universe whose dark and lonely void only the yardstick of light-years can measure.

There has been also a de-humanizing of the whole genetic process. We had accustomed ourselves to the entirely altered status of our planet and the diminished estate of the solar system. It has been more difficult to surrender our own positions as the crowning work of creation's Creator. We may be still that for all we know, but we have an uneasy sense of inexorable processes for which we are only animate dust and all our little dreams and hopes and self-importances iridescent bubbles on the stream of time. Psychology was not even so poetic. It turned us into merely functioning organisms controlled, perhaps, by the ductless glands, attended by the delusion that we were something else and thereby the more deeply entangled. The process of free inquiry with which Liberalism was associated reached its nadir in behavioristic psychology.

All this has given to the last phase of liberal religious thought an altered character. It is looking into the depths over which the faith of forty years ago exultantly flew, feathering its wings with a canto from *In Memoriam* or a quotation from Browning. No wonder many who have hitherto gone along with the liberal movement turned back, shivering and religiously bewildered, to the sunlit and familiar. The left wing of religious Liberalism has frankly surrendered the central positions around which religion has always been organized and gone over to Humanism. The right wing is holding these positions by refusing to recognize, perhaps strategically, what imperils them; the center is perplexed. The pioneers are seeking new supports for faith, but they are working underground or on cloudy heights from which their voices reach us but faintly. Meanwhile Liberalism is halted through the confusions to which the inquiring mind has been reduced in religion.

V

A second reason for the arrest of Liberalism is its unfortunate identification, in many minds, with pre-war idealism and the now discredited Gospel of Progress. The sources of that gospel are fairly clear. The achievements of applied science, to which there seemed no limit, captured the popular imagination. Industry was using them to increase convenience and comfort and luxury. There were disconcerting statistics about the distribution of wealth and income but none save unpleasant fault-finders suspected of socialism paid any attention to them. And somewhere behind it all was Evolution "keeping watch above its own." The then relatively happy world was the outer and evident sign of its action, the creation of a "Power not ourselves" which, if it did not entirely make for righteousness, was at least doing very well for the deserving. It was easy to make a religion of it all and the Liberals were its apostles. The younger pre-war generation accepted it whole-heartedly and when it failed them and their world, were left for a while with no gospel at all. They found what substitutes they could, some of them bitter, some of them sad, some of them earth-stained.

A vigorous group of young religious leaders took refuge in a critical realism and in their disillusioned reaction against an idealism which had gone down in red ruin, have become critical of the whole Liberal position though they really owe to it everything they are which is intellectually free, including their right to criticise it. One may venture to say that they were never really grounded in the disciplined Liberalism of an earlier period. The roots of their faith were in the lush and shallow growth of pre-war idealism and were scorched in the fires which consumed it.

Result: All Liberalism, political and religious, is discredited because it has not delivered the goods it was believed to be under contract to deliver. I say believed. Its calamitous association with the unjustified optimism of a generation ago was not entirely of its own seeking. The earlier Liberals never underestimated the cost of "progress," they never dated the millennium. Their critics to the contrary, they never over-idealized human nature. They did believe in education, in the slow creation of right public opinion. They were not over hasty in social legislation—and they were not crusaders. They were not obscurantists either, they were not afraid of facts and they had within themselves a lonely self-sufficiency which was not conceit but a brave power to go on even in the dark. And

if they were overly hopeful of this world it was easy to be hopeful at the dawn of their new century.

Current realism, being free to judge Liberalism as it pleased, has judged it by its frustrations rather than its really great achievements, and most of all neglected those imponderables upon which Liberalism finally rested its case. A great deal they criticize is not the child of Victorian Liberalism or even the stepchild, though, philosophically, one might suspect a left-handed marriage. If there is to be a renaissance of Liberalism, it will have to disentangle itself from a good deal of what has insisted upon marching under its flags. For I take the contemporaneous reaction against it actually to be due in large part to confusions which it not only did not create but against which it protested and from which even now it offers the only sure way of escape. But our world has for a considerable time been wanting heads to hit—not being entirely clear that they might be helpfully used for something else than a target—and here was Liberalism with its head so lately so high.

VI

Thirdly, Liberalism of every sort has fallen upon an age which opposes to it an entirely different social philosophy and discredits all the machinery through which it has hitherto worked. Liberalism is driven underground when the "man on horseback" rides out. What puts him on the horse—or dictator's seat—is always the anarchy of some established order. "Europe was full of empty thrones," Mussolini is reported to have said, "and I went in and sat down on one of them"—but once he is seated everything which Liberalism has stood for becomes impossible, discredited. "Liberty," Mussolini again by report, "is a stinking corpse." The Duce is not the first to have pronounced a too hasty funeral oration over liberty, or to have been misled as to what is decaying. Liberty does not die so easily. The disintegration of Fascism may eventually require more holding of the nose than the assumed decay of liberty, which, even if it be dead, gives off a sad rather than a salacious odor. That is as it may be, but the whole temper of the time makes it impatient of the slow, patient ways of true Liberalism even when not hostile to it.²

Religious Liberalism is also caught in the revolt against the dominance

² This paragraph is, I think, capable of strong amplification.

of the scientific method, a revolt actually motivated by the apparently devastating effect of one range of scientific conclusions upon human values and religious realities. Liberalism is not to blame for this, nor science either, unless it overreaches the disciplines of its method. But Liberalism had always been hospitable to science, accepted its data to build its own structure of faith, and believed,

"That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster."

Liberalism still believes that; it must. The only alternative is an emotional obscurantism which will leave religion in the air and science without correction from human experience and ideology or else a renaissance of dogmatism: there are signs of both. But Liberalism is discredited by the cold emptiness to which a science chiefly concerned, in a pulsating human world, with bombarding the atom, has brought it. If we should see even in the assault upon the atom an attempt to break through the veil of matter growing ever more imponderable to the Reality behind it, we might be content to wait a little longer before we start the revolt.

For these and other reasons more elusive Liberalism has fallen into disfavor and its spirit is darkened. One has only, for example, to compare the *Christian Century* of to-day with the *Outlook* of say 1900 to see what has happened. Something of the difference is due to the difference between an Abbott and a Morrison; more is due to a changed world; the glow is gone. Also—and this short sentence might be greatly enlarged—its task has grown more difficult. It is one thing to re-date Deuteronomy, another thing to re-define God. This last sentence, with all it implies, suggests the real key to the reaction against liberal religion. It has been led into regions, brought to conclusions, in which the questing spirit is almost lost. The landmarks are gone. Religion, says Goguel, "is an orientation of the soul," but it is far more. It demands forms, faiths, authorities, realities, altars, liturgies. "Where are these?" they say who have watched or followed Liberalism—"You have taken us away in the desert to die." The Liberal does not believe that. There is, he believes, a promised land and he seeks it, though even for him its frontiers are dim and distant. Meanwhile the questing take other roads—and no wonder. Here too the issue is beyond our vision.

VII

It is therefore a difficult time in which to cast up the accounts of Liberal religious thought for the last seventy-five years, though we shall at least be dealing with deflated assets. The credit account is long and shining. Liberalism, as a thoughtful friend says, has been a cleansing force. It may become a pose like anything else but there is an actual catharsis in being honestly openminded. One ceases to be afraid, one opens the doors and windows, one becomes teachable instead of dogmatic, one is freed from the defense of the indefensible, from a dubious or dishonest apologetic, one trusts truth, looks behind forms, seeks the roots of things, understands the divine validity of the great promise of the fourth Gospel which was for a while the secret of the church's power, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Great regions of religious faith are windswept, sunlit and wholesome through the labor of the free religious mind for the last three quarters of a century.

We know the Bible as it is, we know the genesis of the great doctrines. Theology has been vitalized, the history of Christianity clarified and its social applications exalted, affirmed and fairly well defined. Religion itself has been kept possible for a most significant group, hospitality to truth achieved and some heartening progress made toward re-rooting religious faith in the entire contribution of the allied sciences. Transitions have been accomplished comparable only to the recasting of religion in the first creative Christian centuries, and in spite of doleful prophecies the churches which have welcomed this leaven have been as truly Christian as their neighbors who have feared and fought it.

These are achievements for which to thank God and take courage. The debit account is more difficult to state: excessive individualism—now and then; a costly disregard of the emotional elements in religion and society and an equally costly disregard of the corporate force and historic continuity which have given the Catholic Church its enormous staying power. The liberal mind has often been mystic, but it has first and last carried too much traffic on one track. It has underestimated the tenacity of the order it has undertaken to transform, and its partial arrest to-day is due to the complex of inheritances old as human time, woven and woven again through corporate Christianity and the social order, which seem to give way and then in crisis times come back unchanged. Also as it has

gone, the awesomeness of the adventure to which it is committed chills it with a numbing doubt of its own adequacy. Which is, perhaps, good for its soul.

It may be that Liberalism as a system—whether political, social or religious—has had its day. New forces may create new forms and what Liberalism began be continued by those who will do for their time what the Liberal did for his time. One may trust that when their period of exuberance has passed they will recognize their indebtedness to the road-builders who have furnished them a highway to go on with. And yet it is difficult to see how even they can go on without continuing and using the essential spirit of Liberalism as Morley defines it. There is in no region any safe substitute for the inquiring mind proceeding by trial and error, taught by the past, sighting truth from afar and waiting for those profound verifications of truth in harmony, force, freedom and wealth of life which have hitherto been the only guideposts to assure us that we are on the right road.

The spirit of Liberalism may perhaps be defined in a single sentence as Reasonableness—"the open-minded search for essentials and determinations of policy [and faith] by gradual approach to understanding." Just now reasonableness finds itself hard pressed. We do not know what fortunes will attend the seekers of to-morrow or whether in another three quarters of a century what now confuses us will have found for them a triumphant resolution. They may or may not reach the happy isles. We only know the seas will not wash them down.³

³ Ortega y Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses*—read since this article was written—is a masterful analysis of the forces which have brought us to our present impasse. Strongly recommended.

The Holy Ghost in Mystical Experience

R. BIRCH HOYLE

THE emphasis laid by the Buchmanites upon "guidance" is leading to a fresh study of the suggestions which are taken as indicating the working of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of men. From recent theological and religious literature the following passages are culled; they may help form some rough sketch of how the Spirit works to-day. But both terms, "Holy Ghost" or "Spirit," and "mystical experience," need clarification. The phrase "Holy Spirit," like a far-traveled ship, has had attached to it, like barnacles, other things which need to be stripped off. "Life force" has been pressed into service by G. Bernard Shaw, *élan vital*, by M. Bergson and others, as a substitute for the biblical term, and then it has been squeezed into an evolutionary mold to account for a *continuum* between the first faint groping of the lowest forms of life up to the direct action of Almighty God himself upon human souls. Thus M. Bergson, in his latest book (*Les deux sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, pp. 225f.), describes the *élan vital* as "a great stream of creative energy launched into matter," which is seen as instinct in the lower animals, as dynamic force emerging into consciousness in man, and which is expressed in ethical and religious terms. This is akin to Virgil's Stoic view of

"Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus,
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet,"

but can only be adapted to the biblical view by a *tour de force*. As Evelyn Underhill justly says, "There is little to distinguish such a conception of the Spirit from a general doctrine of the immanence of God." It is akin to Pantheism, "Whereas for men of the Bible the spirit is never fully here: a calm enveloping Presence like the *psychê* of Plotinus, penetrating the human world. Their emphasis is on its distinctness. *Veni, Sancte Spiritus.*"¹ "It is 'wholly other': the object, not of philosophic speculation, but of direct and awestruck experience."² Miss Underhill, in a later passage, helps us to dissociate "spirit" from the frequent assertion nowadays that man, as "spirit," is continuous with the Holy Spirit. She says, "The Spirit's

¹ *The Golden Sequence*, p. 14.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

molding action" is not equivalent with "emergent evolution" or any "process." "The Spirit starts process and is not the result of any process. His priority is absolute."³ We shall be wise to confine ourselves to the Bible view of the Spirit whose "coming" is associated with our Lord's Ascension and Glorification. "Spirit was not yet, for Jesus was not yet glorified," says the writer of the fourth Gospel.

"Mystical" is a term harder still to determine. Dean Inge, in his Bampton Lectures, gave twenty-six definitions. M. Bergson gives a good description of the nature of "mystical experience." "It suffices that the soul feels that it has allowed itself to be penetrated, without its personality being thus absorbed, by a Being able to do immensely more than the soul can do." "Our definition," he says, "of the great mystic is of an individual who will be freed from the limits assigned to the race by its materiality: one who continues and prolongs thus the Divine activity."⁴ This description is closely akin to the Bishop of Birmingham's statement. "Mystical experience consists essentially (as one) in which the subject believes that he has come into direct communication with Ultimate Reality. The veils normally hide God. His Presence is indirectly apprehended, his nature inferred by the activity of mind. But there come states of soul when the veils are removed and Supreme Reality is revealed to us. These states constitute mystical experience."⁵ Such mystical experiences are universal and are found in varying degrees in all, or most, religions. Much depends upon how Deity is conceived. If as a Sultan, then the mystic becomes his adoring slave: if as "Lover," the *devotee* may, as in Sufism, be filled with passionate eroticism. But in the Christian religion, religious mysticism is, as R. C. Moberly said, "The doctrine, or rather, the experience of the Holy Ghost. It is the realization of human personality as characterized by, and consummated in, the indwelling reality of the Spirit of Christ, which is God."⁶ This is but Paul's view, put in other words, when he prays that the Ephesians may "have the eyes of their heart suffused with light," that "they may be dynamized through the Spirit entering into the inner man with the result that Christ takes up permanent residence through faith in their hearts" and they "are initiated into the secret hid before all the ages" (Ephesians 2, 3). In all these experiences the mystic is being "affected,"

³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 235.

⁵ *Scientific Theory and Religious Experience*, p. 617.

⁶ *Atonement and Personality*, p. 312.

wrought upon, by the Great Other who confronts him: he is being initiated into "The mystery of God." He says,

"I know not what my secret is, I know but it is mine:
I know to live for it were bliss, to die for it divine."

Usually there is some human preparation for such an "incursion" of the "Spirit." Roman Catholics speak of "the grace of recollection." Attention is withdrawn from outward things: the soul is at leisure for God. Thomas à Kempis shows us how to "recollect" and "make request." The whole of Chapter II of Book IV of *The Imitatio Christi* is taken up with this prior discipline. Pierre Corneille rendered the pith of this passage into exquisite French, which may be Englished thus:

"Speak thou within my heart, do thou my teacher be:
None other do I need, to explain to me thy law.
When I seek thy sacred Presence, every creature silent be!
That I may hear thy whisper, which bows me down with awe."

The effects of the Spirit's coming are often described. "Feeling inspired" is one. Nietzsche, of all men, has described such an experience. Though the "Prime Mover" provoking such an experience is not mentioned, the moving within the soul is unmistakable. "I will describe inspiration," says Nietzsche. "If one had the smallest trace of superstition in him, it would hardly be possible to set aside completely the idea that one is the mere incarnation, mouthpiece, or medium of an Almighty Power. The idea of revelation, in the sense that something becomes suddenly visible and audible, with indescribable accuracy and certainty, which profoundly convulses and upsets one, simply describes the matter of fact. One hears, does not seek; one receives, does not ask who gives. The thought suddenly flashes up like lightning: it comes with necessity, unhesitatingly. I have never had any choice in the matter. There is an ecstasy such that the immense strain of it is sometimes relaxed by a flood of tears. . . . There is a feeling that one is completely out of hand . . . there is a depth of happiness in which things that are most painful and gloomy do not operate as oppositions, but as conditioned, as demanded as necessary shades of color in such an outburst of light. . . . Everything happens quite involuntarily, as if in a tempestuous outburst of freedom, of absoluteness, of power and divinity." . . . "This is my experience of inspiration."

It should be added that Nietzsche's experience is far from being

ascribed to the Holy Spirit: he was filled with colossal egoism and boasted that for thousands of years none had had an experience like his. But his graphic description enables us to appreciate the Pauline experience of "the exceeding greatness of the Spirit's power" as given in Ephesians 1. The "state of vision" is another feature of the Spirit's working. Things seemingly disconnected are seen to be linked together and fused into a unity. Later, the mind looking back upon such an "illumination" is lost in wonder. Take Santa Teresa, the Spanish mystic, as a classical describer of such an experience. "I cannot understand what the mind is," she writes, "nor how it differs from the soul, or the spirit either; all three seem to be one, though the soul sometimes leaps forth out of itself, like a fire that has become a flame, but it is still the same flame of the same fire. Something subtle and swift seems to issue from the soul, to ascend to its highest part and to go whither our Lord will. It seems a flight: this little bird of the spirit seems to have escaped out of the prison of the body; till then, my life was my own; since then, my life is the life which God lives in me."⁷ Ignatius Loyola had such an experience. "As I sat by a stream one day, my spirit enjoyed an extraordinary enlightenment, so that all the knowledge taken together, which, by God's help, I had gained down to my sixty-second year, was not equal to that brought to me in those few moments. It was as if I had become another being and received a totally different intellect." The Görlitz shoemaker, Jacob Boehme, had such an "opening" and tells us, as neither Thomas Aquinas nor Loyola could, what he "saw."

"In my earnest Christian seeking and desire the Gate was opened unto me, so that in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a university, at which I did exceedingly wonder. I know not how it happened to me, and thereupon I turned my heart to praise God. And I saw and knew the Being of all Beings, the Depth, and that without the Depth, also the birth of the Holy Trinity, the descent and original of this World, and of all creatures through the Divine Wisdom. I knew and saw in myself all the Three Worlds, the Divine, Angelical and Paradisal World, and then the Dark World, and then, thirdly, the Eternal and Visible World." For twelve years he had "to go like a child to school" to fathom its meaning. "Then it fell on me like a shower: it came like a sun but not in continual shining, so that man must acknowledge that his knowledge is not his own, but God's, and from God, and that God knoweth in the soul of man after what manner and measure he (man) perceiveth."⁸

Such language may seem strange and yet a verse of a hymn of Charles

⁷ *Vida*, pp. 124, 134, 146, 174, French translation.

⁸ *Autobiography*, Letter 2.

Wesley's (which Dr. Rendel Harris thinks is the greatest in our language) expresses such an experience.

"God through himself we then shall know
If thou (*sc.* The Holy Spirit) within us shine,
And sound with all thy saints below
The depths of love divine."

With George Fox the "vision" gave a new insight into the meaning of nature.

"Now was I come up in Spirit through the flaming sword, into the Paradise of God. All things were new, and all the creation had another smell unto me than before. The Creation was opened unto me and it was shown to me how all things had their names given unto them according to their nature and power. The Lord showed me that such as were faithful to him in the Power and Light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before the Fall, in which the admirable works of the Creation . . . may be known, through the openings of that Divine Word of Wisdom by which they were made. Great things did the Lord lead me into and wonderful depths were opened to me. . . ."⁹

Unlike Nietzsche, the revelation of the Spirit begets humility. Thus Boehme wrote:

"I have sought and begged of God many hundred times, that if my knowledge did not make for his glory and conduce to the amending and instructing of my brethren, that he would be pleased to take it from me, and preserve me only in his love. Yet I found that by praying or earnest desiring I did only enkindle the fire more strongly within me. And yet it is not I, but the Spirit of God that doeth it according to the measure as he pleaseth. . . . The Spirit of God in the mystery of my spirit did sufficiently show me to what end it was given. . . . Though I cannot say that I have learned or fully apprehended it, but as long as the hand of God stayeth upon me, I understand it: but if it hides itself, then I know not mine own labor, and am made a stranger to the works of mine own hands. Whereby I may see how altogether impossible it is to search out and apprehend the mysteries of God, without God's Spirit. Therefore I ascribe and attribute nothing to myself: it is not my work: I desire not any human applause or honor for it."¹⁰

Power, vision, insight into the meaning of nature, as we have seen, have attended the "coming" of the Spirit. Supremely comes "light" when one seeks to understand the Scriptures. Dr. A. B. Bruce had on his desk in Glasgow Free Church College the letters O. S. O. T. L. A. T. T. L. T. L. M.: "O send out Thy light and thy Truth, let them lead me." A fitting prayer when pondering God's word. Eckhart quotes Augustine's

⁹ *Journal*, Ed. 3, 1765, p. 17.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 16f.: 23.

saying: "He best of all will hear and understand the Scriptures, who, unshackled by the mind, seeks for the truth of Scripture in itself: in the same Spirit wherein it is written and spoken: namely, the Holy Spirit." For, as Dr. Sir Robertson Nicoll says: "He alone can interpret the Scriptures: He only has the key to the Scriptures. No man, save by the Holy Ghost, can say that the Scripture is the word of God." And so the Quaker, Bernard Barton, sings:

"The Spirit breathes upon the Word, and brings the truth to sight,
Precepts and promises afford, a sanctifying Light."

And John Milton, when commencing his *Paradise Lost*, though he had in great measure the gift of the Muses, invokes, not them, but

"Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me; for thou knowest . . . what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support."

Such a prayer corresponds with "the clearing of the eye of the soul" which Plato enjoined upon all who seek mystical experience. That "clearing" denotes the purgative way of which the mystics speak. Dwelling upon all that the word "Holy" denotes will effectually purify the inward vision. Rudolf Otto, in "The Idea of the Holy," has brought out the "numinous" aspect with fullness. The means used by the "Spirit of holiness" for impressing the sense of the supernatural and the superhuman are chiefly the Word, the Bible, and persons. Bunyan gives many examples, in his "Grace Abounding," of the voice of the Spirit he experienced. Here is one. "That word, 'flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone,' was sweet to me. . . . Now I could see myself in earth and in heaven at once: in heaven, by Christ, my Head, by my Righteousness and Life, though on earth by my body and person." He found, to use Paul's phrase, "the sword of the Spirit" to be the cutting edge that pierced his heart with a sense of sin, and as a preacher, the same "sword" to be his mightiest ally when seeking to win souls. Preachers often find that the Spirit has been using them when they were unaware of it. Dante knew the "cutting edge" of the Spirit. "In the *Purgatorio*," says Evelyn Underhill, "there is a marvelous moment, in which a tremor passes through the Holy Mountain: and all the souls on all the terraces, forgetting their own pains, rise to their feet and sing the 'Gloria.' And when Dante asks what has happened, he

is told that one soul, casting off the last fetters of selfish desire, has risen and gone forward in freedom to God."¹¹

Rufus Jones has given us a fine instance of how the Spirit uses persons as His instrument. He tells us that his aunt "had, to a rare degree, brought herself into parallelism with divine currents and she was extraordinarily sensitive to the environment. She seemed by swift intuition to know what the will of God was for almost every occasion of life. . . . There was never any use trying to conceal anything from her, for in all the deeper matters of life, she read me like an open book."¹² This "reading one like an open book" is a keen comment on the passage in Hebrews, where it is said, "The word of the Lord is sharper than any two-edged sword," which the Spirit has used. It cuts and pierces, it lays a man open, turns him inside out, like a butcher with a carcass.

Sword suggests the warrior spirit: He is gentle also, and in mystical experiences such He has often been found. Spurgeon has a wonderful sermon on that aspect, on the text from Canticles, "Come, thou South Wind, blow on my garden." Tersteegen, the German hymn writer, with a strong vein of mysticism, caught that "gentle voice, soft as the breath of even." "*Mache mich einfaellig*" is such a verse.

"Spirit, all pervading, may thy clearest shining
Cleanse my soul with thy refining,
As the gladsome flowers, the bright sun beholding,
Their sweet petals are unfolding,
So may I, 'neath thine eye, catch thy bright off-lying,
All thy grace displaying."

As Eckhart puts it, "Divine light enters the soul, not openly by the door, but covertly, and veiled, so that the soul is hardly conscious of when God comes and goes, and God does this in kindness: this keeping himself dark and well concealed. Suppose God came openly into the soul, she would not be able to bear it, she would be all undone with love and joy." The French Catholic, P  re Caussade, went beyond this secret entrance to find the Spirit as a Teacher. "The Spirit keeps school within us, in the soul's ground. He listens and speaks, teaches, moves, turns and molds it as he will. Of these workings of the Spirit on spirit, the person affected knows, as it seems, almost nothing: yet comes from them with certain impressions by which he is completely renewed."

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 112f.

¹² *Contemporary American Theology*, vol. I, pp. 192f.

Probably the most sublime experience is when the Spirit prays within the human soul, as Paul said, in Romans 8. In his "Confession," Saint Patrick of Ireland tells us that one night he saw in a vision Christ praying within his soul, and he heard a voice saying, "I am that Spirit which prays in thee and above thee." This is one aspect of "the fellowship of the Spirit." Of that secret intercourse Baron von Hügel said, "Spirit and spirit, God and the creature, are not two material bodies, of which one can only be where the other is not, but, on the contrary, as regards our own spirit, God's Spirit ever works in closest penetration and stimulation of our own. Just as, in return, we cannot find God's Spirit simply separate from our own spirit within ourselves. Our spirit clothes and expresses his; his Spirit first creates and then sustains and stimulates our own."

Ere we close, let us present three extracts which take us far into the secret place where the Spirit is heard speaking to the soul. The first is from Saint Augustine.¹³ "Thus does God's speaking teach a man. The speaking is not by any bodily nature, nor reverberating the air between the ear and the Speaker, nor by any spiritual creature, or by apparitions as in dreams or otherwise. He speaks by the Truth (the Spirit is Truth), if the ears of the mind be ready and not the ears of the body. For he speaks unto the best part of the whole man and that wherein alone God excels man. But the mind is weakened and darkened by the mist of inveterate error and disabled from enduring that unchangeable Light, until it be gradually purified, healed and made fit for such bliss. Therefore, it must first be cleansed and instructed by faith to set it the surer. The means are, by God's Son, who is God and man."

The Anabaptist, Hans Denck, writes: "The two wills, divine and human, co-operate: but only after the suppression of the human will. The man must do that for himself, but we should hearken to what the Spirit says in us, namely, that such a 'breaking' is the best 'making,' that what seems to us negation and nothingness, is, in God's eyes, the noblest 'something.' This witness is in all men and preaches to all." "The Voice which speaks in every heart of man and proclaims God's will, is the immortal Spirit of God which since eternal times has mediated the divine will to men, become man in Christ, and to all eternity will work in men as the Spirit of Love. Christ as Spirit lived from eternity in mankind and will live eternally, not only figuratively but in actuality, activity."

¹³ *De Civitate Dei*, XI, ii.

Our third witness will be Saint John of the Cross, the Spaniard. "One thinks (when in the Spirit) that he reasons with himself and replies to himself, as if two persons were conversing. This, however, is not a complete illusion. Without doubt the mind acts according to its own activity, but it serves as the Holy Spirit's instrument, and it is with his aid that concepts, words, judgments that are true, are formed. The impression of a conversation comes this way. In this state of contemplation the understanding is united to the truth it is considering, and as the Holy Spirit is found united to it also, as he is to all truth, in this manner there is communication between the understanding and the Holy Spirit by the intermediary of the Truth. Then, by this union, there is produced successively in the soul truths derived from that which is the focus of contemplation, and this is the Spirit, as a true Teacher, who opens the way and sets forth the light. This is one of the Spirit's ways of teaching." And Saint John of the Cross shows us the touchstone by which the pure gold of the Spirit's utterance can be tested and proved to be no human or demonic delusion. "If the words and ideas are accompanied in the soul by love to God, joined to humility and reverence, then believe that it is done by an action of the Holy Spirit, for these virtues are the wrappings of his favors."¹⁴

There is no need to dwell further on these experiences of the Holy Spirit: our spirits should turn to adoration and worship, full of the love which is the Spirit's characteristic quality. For, in the Mystical Theology, the Spirit is Love and the begetter of love in believing souls. This is, as M. Bergson shows, in his chapter on "Dynamic Religion," the sign of "the renovating power of mystical experience." "A perfect mysticism will be activity, creation, love. For the love which consumes it is not simply a man's love for God, it is God's love for all men. By means of God, alongside of God, he loves humanity with a divine love. The *élan* of love which leads the *devotee* to raise humanity up to God and to complete God's creation, can only succeed with the aid of God whose instruments such *devotees* are."¹⁵ But the French savant is simply re-echoing Paul's word, "God's love has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us." May we ever be open and willing to receive so awful, so lovely, so mighty a Guest!

¹⁴ *La Montee du Carmel*, II, xxvii.

¹⁵ *Op cit.*, pp. 241, 249, 253.

Form Criticism: A New Method of Research

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IT is now quite widely recognized that an entirely new school of Gospel research has grown up, with headquarters in Germany, since the war. Its method is called *Formgeschichte*, or Form Criticism, and its attention is devoted to the separate units into which the tradition underlying the Synoptic Gospels may be analyzed. Although one or two works of the school appeared before the outbreak of the war, and two or three during its course, it is chiefly—for obvious reasons—since 1918 that the method has won general recognition as a new departure in New Testament study. One may even go farther back, and discover anticipations of Form Criticism in the pages of such writers as Julius Wellhausen and Johannes Weiss; nevertheless, great as was their influence upon contemporary students, and indispensable in the evolution of the method, they can scarcely be reckoned as members of the school. The growing influence of the method at the present time may be inferred from the comparatively recent appearance of new and much enlarged editions of the two principal works of two of its leaders: the pioneer work of Martin Dibelius, *The Form Criticism of the Gospel* (2d. ed., 1933), and Rudolf Bultmann's much more radical—and even "skeptical"—*History of the Synoptic Tradition* (2d. ed., 1931). Two excellent accounts of the school have appeared in English: *The Gospel Before the Gospels*, by Burton Scott Easton (1928), and *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, by Vincent Taylor (1933). Both these works are critical in their attitude, though both endeavor to gather up the real gains of the movement, such as the fresh emphasis upon the reality and vitality of the oral tradition, the importance of teaching and worship (as distinct from missionary preaching) in the Early Church, the early date of the tradition and its general authenticity, the light reflected upon the conditions surrounding and problems confronting the church in the first two generations, both in Palestine and elsewhere.

It is the purpose of the present article to set forth briefly the main outlines of the form-critical method, to show its general tendency and chief results, and to determine if possible its rightful place in the rounded whole

of modern New Testament research. It is of course too soon to undertake a final evaluation of the movement. But it is no part of our purpose to pass a final judgment. Suffice it that Form Criticism is an interesting and in some ways most valuable method of research, to which the coming generation of New Testament students will have to pay careful attention, and one from which the present generation has something to learn.

I

The great and outstanding contribution of the nineteenth century toward the solution of the Synoptic Problem was the *Two Document Hypothesis*, namely, the hypothesis—or better, theory—that the fundamental sources of the Synoptics are two in number, the Gospel of Mark and the document (or collection of oral material) which scholars label Q. Matthew and Luke have used both Mark and Q, though in different ways, Matthew, for example, rearranging the earlier material far more thoroughly than did Luke, though his “framework” of narrative follows Mark with some consistency. The full establishment of this theory took place in the opening decade of the new century, as far as English-speaking scholarship is concerned. Sir John Hawkins’ *Horæ Synopticæ* appeared in 1899; a second edition in 1909; the *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, edited by William Sanday, came out in 1911, and James Moffatt’s *Introduction* the same year. Volumes I and II of V. H. Stanton’s *The Gospels as Historical Documents* were dated 1903 and 1909. In order to contrast the now generally accepted hypothesis with its predecessors, one has only to turn to such an account as that by P. W. Schmiedel in the article “Gospels” in *Encyclopædia Biblica* (esp. coll. 1858f), where the older attempts at solution are described and illustrated with diagrams. Such a hypothesis as the one suggested by Saint Augustine, that Mark is an abridgment of Matthew, commands almost no assent to-day: too obviously the view was derived from the popularity—and position in the canonical order of New Testament books—of Matthew, “the ecclesiastical gospel.” On the other hand, the ready reliance upon “the oral tradition” as a solution of the problem of differences between the Gospels has been almost completely abandoned. Contrast with current views, for example, T. M. Lindsay’s arrangement of Marcan material as a “Prologue” to his chronological New Testament in “Everyman’s Library” (1906), where the “Triple Tradition” was set forth, in the words of Mark, as the oral gospel common to

all the churches in the first century—and apparently even before the letters of Paul were written! The Two Document Hypothesis cannot be said to be universally accepted, at the present time; but it holds nine tenths of the field; and the remaining questions usually revolve about the nature of Q, whether it was a document, or an oral collection, or the testimony of an individual, and so on. As a transition-stage, there were such theories as those of Archdeacon Allen, set forth in his Commentary on Matthew and in *Oxford Studies*, and the more or less widespread effort to identify Q with the “Logia” reported to have been composed in Hebrew by the apostle Matthew; as also the attempt to account for Mark’s fresh and vivid narrative as directly derived from the “reminiscences” of Peter, according to Papias’ quotation of “the Elder.” There are problems, in this area, not yet solved; but the general solution afforded by the Theory is all but unquestioned to-day.

On the Continent, and to some extent in Britain and America, the views of Bernhard Weiss steadily gained ground during the nineties and early nineteen-hundreds, namely, that Luke used still another document, L, in addition to Mark and Q. But there were not many defenders of the view, this side of the Channel and the Atlantic. Professor B. S. Easton has been one of the best known and most capable exponents of the Weissian view, though with modifications and independent contributions of his own: *vide* his *Gospel According to Saint Luke* (1926). The outstanding and epochal work of Canon B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, appeared in 1924. In this he set forth a “Four Document Hypothesis,” not as a substitute for but as a supplement to the prevailing Two Document one. His sources are Q, Mark, L, and M—the last found in the matter peculiar to Matthew, as L is found in that peculiar to Luke. It is not absolutely certain—perhaps not even in the author’s mind—that this was a written document, and, as he suggested, of Jerusalem origin. But there is little doubt that at least there is a stratum of tradition in Matthew readily distinguishable from the other gospel sources; one has only to isolate it, and compare it with Mark, Q, or L, to see this for himself. Whether or not these sources were all homogeneous is still another question. Easton includes the Nativity, Passion, and Resurrection narratives in his identification of L-material; Streeter omits the Nativity sections, and holds, as a further elaboration of his theory, that Q and L were first combined, probably by Luke, and later on, before the Gospel was published, the Marcan

material was inserted into Q+L (or "Proto-Luke") in seven major sections. "Proto-Luke" accordingly began with Luke 3. 1—without doubt a capital beginning for a primitive gospel. The theory has received further, and independent, support in the work of Vincent Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel* (1926), and in his useful pamphlet, *The First Draft of Saint Luke's Gospel* (1927). Moreover, if the Gospel of Mark be carefully examined for evidence of earlier sources, there can be no question that the Passion Narrative will suggest itself at once as probably the most primitive stratum (cc. 10-16; the whole of Jesus' ministry is covered in the preceding nine chapters and much of their contents is orientated toward the climax in Jerusalem). Other hypothetical sources are the Controversies with the scribes and Pharisees, the Petrine material, and a possible use of—or at least possible echoes of—the material in Q. Thus the whole tendency of present-day documentary analysis of the Gospels is in the direction of identifying a *plurality* of sources: what one might call a "Multiple Source Theory." Canon Streeter's contention, for example, is not that there are just four sources, and no more, but *at least four*.

It ought not to surprise anyone familiar with literary history, or with the study of historical documents, that the evangelic writers made use of earlier written sources; or that these sources were more than one or two in number; or that they were rearranged, revised, and set in new combinations and contexts by the authors (or editors) of the Gospels, and provided with "editorial" introductions and summaries. Luke clearly hints in his Prologue that this was the case; and like any other Hellenistic historian, he takes pen in hand to set forth an accurate *diegesis* of events which "many" before him had narrated. If Polybius or Arrian had written these words we should have taken the hint at once: the author means to use sources, and good ones. The parallels in early Franciscan literature have more than once been pointed out, by Canon Streeter, Professor Coulton, and others: historical and biographical literature naturally followed this method, in the days of manuscripts. Further parallels might be adduced from our own times, when of course the biographer is expected to use—and also name—his sources. Another striking parallel, from the days when books were still commonly copied by hand, is afforded by recent research in the history of *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis. According to Dr. Paul Hagen of Lübeck, who discovered in the City Library of that place an old MS containing what appears to be the original upon which

Books II and III of the *Imitation* were based, and supplementing his researches with those of Professor Albert Hyma, it appears that there were no less than seven sources of this Christian classic: Bk. I, 1-16, 17-23, 24-25; Bk. II; Bk. III (48 of the 59 cc.); Bk. IV, 6-9; 10, 12, 15, 18. These earlier treatises came into the hands of Thomas, apparently, when plague had decimated the ranks of the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer; and he put them together into a book of his own, with a number of added chapters (in Bks. II and III), and with considerable retouching, especially in the latter half. The original ("L," as designated by Hyma) was a treatise on devotion—"Admonitions to Inwardness," as Hagen calls it in his translation (1926)—addressed to Christians generally, and summing up the teaching of the great Gerard Groote, founder of the movement. The actual author of "L" was presumably one of his disciples, probably Florentius Radewijns, whose little treatise in sixty chapters sums up the precious fruitage of that small but influential movement of Flemish mysticism inaugurated and inspired by Groote. What Thomas Hammerken did with these treatises was fashion them into one work, in four "books," and make of it a manual of *monastic* devotion. In the light of the sources, especially of the Lübeck MS, it is now comparatively easy (1) to set off the additions made by Thomas (as Hyma has done in his translation, 1927) and also (2) to read between the lines and thus recover, at least in imagination, the oral teaching, and even the devotional notebooks, of the saints and teachers among the brethren at Deventer and Windesheim. That is to say we are led back through the documentary sources to an underlying oral tradition of a remarkable religious movement: a procedure strikingly similar to the course of modern gospel research. If the Franciscan sources parallel the evangelic use of *narrative* sources, especially the narratives of Mark, those of the "Devotio Moderna" illustrate the use of sources containing *teaching*, and provide a not altogether remote parallel to the use of Q in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, especially Luke.

II

It is against this background of the source-analysis of the Gospels that Form Criticism is to be understood and evaluated. Without the preliminary breaking-up of the material into its component sections, or "pericopes," Form Criticism would never have come into existence. Moreover, it is as the latest phase in the onward sweep of modern New Testament

research that the movement is best viewed—not as something absolutely novel and unrelated to earlier investigation. The results of previous research, as we have tried to point out, involve: (1) the recognition of a plurality of written sources, at least three or four, probably more; and (2) the recognition of the rightful place of oral tradition, not as a short and simple explanation of all differences (though certainly of some), but rather (a) as the basic presupposition of all the documents (which were only various writings-down of this tradition), and especially (b) as the explanation of the various *forms* taken by the synoptic material. What Form Criticism undertakes is precisely the next step in recovering the original material, the stuff, so to speak, out of which the gospel *sources* were created. How came these sources to be composed? Out of what sort of oral material? What was its original oral “form,” before the authors of the Gospels, or even the compilers of the earlier written documents, set to work? Can we recover the actual form of the material as it circulated by word of mouth, in the years before the compilers of Q and L (and M?) or the authors of the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and Matthew set it down in writing? These are some of the questions to which the Form Critics have addressed themselves. It is easy to see how such questions naturally arise, once the source-analysis of the Gospels is presupposed, and especially when one surveys the fragmentary sections into which the literary anatomy of modern criticism, speaking generally, has divided up their narratives. One may state the “basal assumption” of Form Criticism in a very few words, as Professor Taylor has described it (*Formation*, p. 10): “The basal assumption is that during this period [before the gospel sources were written] the tradition circulated mainly in separate oral units which can be classified according to their form.”

This presupposition is not wholly new; it has, as a matter of fact, been operative in other fields of research than New Testament. Most students of Form Criticism trace the beginnings of the movement, in some measure, to the late Professor Hermann Gunkel, the veteran Old Testament scholar of Berlin. In his little book on *The Folk-Lore of the Old Testament* (Tübingen, 1917) he pointed out that it fell into four main classes: Myth, Saga, Legend, and Folk-tale—this last poetic in form, as a rule. Though he did not actually carry through this classification in detail, in the fifteen brief chapters of his book, preferring to classify the material by subject, not form, he nevertheless gave expression to views that were bound to be

fruitful in other fields than his own. Almost at the beginning of the volume he wrote:

"Though we have taken it for granted that these poetic narratives originally existed in oral tradition, they have come down to us in the form given them by more or less independent literary works. At a time when the entire culture of a people came to be literary, and when accordingly its oral traditions were threatened with extinction, devoted hands rescued them from such a fate and gave them a permanent place in literature. Very different were the ways in which this took place, preserving the poetic narratives to later generations. Often, most fortunately, they were written down exactly in the form in which they had long been told and retold. In other cases, authors, intent upon using them as material for larger works, fitted them into longer narratives, at the same time no doubt impressing upon them their own spirit and outlook. Frequently therefore the only traces left are the allusions of later poets or speakers, who use them either to deck out their own creations or else make use of them for special purposes of their own, with a meaning wholly different from that which they originally bore. It must accordingly be the concern of the scholar to single out, as carefully and skillfully as he can, the original material from its later accretions, and as far as possible restore it to its initial form. And one may undertake this task with the greater confidence of success, in that the materials show, as a rule, considerable similarity in *form*, and that parallels are not infrequently to be found among the same people, or among other people, often indeed in fairly large quantity. Hence the investigator must keep his eyes open for such later transformations, and study the way in which they make their appearance."¹

Though phrased in language applicable only to the Old Testament literature, it is easy to recognize in this paragraph the very root of *Formgeschichte*, almost its Credo! It is to be observed, however, by way of preliminary (1), that Gunkel clearly recognized that his major classifications (Myth, Saga, Legend, and Folk-poem) often overlap (p. 7), and hence present many difficulties in their unravelling; (2) that Gunkel himself did not classify his material exclusively by form; and (3) that he was particularly interested in *poetic structure*, rather than prose "form"—a point one may confirm for himself by perusal of Gunkel's other works, for example, his great *Introduction* to the Psalms, and his *Commentary* on Genesis. He always insisted that Religion and Poetry have a close relation in origin and by nature: Religion finds its highest expression in Poetry, and Poetry finds in Religion its noblest subject-matter. Hence poetic narrative is far better qualified than is bare history to be the bearer of religious ideas. One may hope that Form Criticism in the New Testament will be not un-

¹ *Das Märchen im Alten Testament*, pp. 4f. Tübingen: Mohr, 1917. Cf. *The Legends of Genesis* (English translation, 1901), pp. 42ff.

mindful of the importance of this factor—though it must be confessed that it has not, to date, received adequate recognition by members of the school.

It was inevitable, then, that questions about the form of the oral tradition should be asked, and that efforts should be made to classify the material in accordance with whatever "forms" could be made out as fairly common in the Gospels. Without attempting to list all the classifications which have been proposed, or to criticize them in detail—matters discussed in the works of Easton and Taylor named above—we may take as examples the two systems of Dibelius and Bultmann. In his new edition, Dibelius proposes this general scheme:

- Paradigms (or "models" used in preaching).
- Novels (that is, tales).
- Legends.
- The Passion Narrative (distinct and separate from the rest).
- Collections (chiefly Sayings and Parables of Jesus).
- "Paränese" (exhortations).
- Myths (largely ætiological).

Bultmann's scheme is different: Miracle Stories, Apothegms, Words of Jesus (Proverbs, Prophetic and Apocalyptic Sayings, and Sayings concerning the Law). This is the outline followed in his little book, *The Study of the Synoptic Gospels* (2d ed., Giessen, 1930). In his much larger and more elaborate *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (2d ed., Göttingen, 1931), it is as follows:

- I. Apothegms.
 - (a) Controversies and School Debates.
 - (b) Biographic apothegms.
- II. Words of Jesus.
 - (a) Logia, or Wisdom-words.
 - (b) Prophetic and Apocalyptic Sayings.
 - (c) Sayings about the Law and Rules governing the Community (his followers).
 - (d) "I"-words (that is, sayings in the first person).
 - (e) Parables and related material.
- III. Miracle Stories (Healing and Nature Miracles).
- IV. Historical Narratives and Legends.

There is of course a rough general correspondence in these schemes, a certain agreement made inevitable by the subject matter: Bultmann

includes the Passion Narrative under his historical narratives; "Paradigms" and "Apothegms" are roughly the same, though Dibelius' strong emphasis on the importance of *preaching* in the Early Church is essential to his view; "Novels" and Miracle Stories are the same—though the terms bear different connotations; Dibelius' "Myths," chiefly ætiological, are Bultmann's "Legends"; Exhortations ("Paränese") and Sayings of Jesus are widely divergent in connotation, though the material overlaps considerably. A much simpler scheme is that proposed by Professor Taylor: Pronouncement-Stories, Sayings and Parables, Miracle Stories, Stories about Jesus, the Passion Narrative. Here, it will be seen, the "Pronouncement-Stories" cover both "Apothegms" and some of the "Words of Jesus" in Bultmann's scheme.

"Their chief characteristic . . . is that they culminate in a saying of Jesus which expresses some ethical or religious precept; the saying may be evoked by a question friendly or otherwise, or may be associated with an incident which is indicated in very few words. Prized because they gave guidance to the first Christians, these stories circulated as single units of tradition, or were combined in groups on a purely topical thread" (*Formation*, p. 63).

III

Now it may be asked, What is the use of any of these, or of any other similar scheme of classification of the evangelic material? How does it help us in understanding either the Life and Teaching of the Master, or the process by which the tradition of that Life and Teaching was circulated and handed down in the earliest church? To answer roundly (1), it helps us in recovering the historical data for the Life and Teaching of Jesus since it at least promises a methodological device for distinguishing the original nucleus from later accretions, added during the course of oral tradition. For a long time scholars have recognized the editorial additions made by Matthew and Luke, say, to material taken over from Mark and Q; but this newer method proposes to strip off accretions and lay bare modifications suffered by the material before it reached the gospel writers. It is something like textual criticism, in this respect. We know that variants were common in the second century, as well as in the third, and later. But our manuscripts—except for a few papyrus fragments—give us almost no "control" over these earlier variants, certainly none at all for variants arising in the first two or three "generations" (of textual transmission)

following the autographs. Yet we know that variations must have taken place; what they were, we can only surmise. Some of the difficulties with the text at the end of Luke, for example, would undoubtedly be cleared up if we had even a few fragments of an early second-century manuscript! Form Criticism has to do, not with textual "pre-history," but with the "pre-history"—that is, the earlier stage of the history—of the tradition before it got into the Gospels. (2) In the second place, Form Criticism undertakes to apply the "laws" governing oral tradition, and discover what was likely to be told, and *how* it was likely to be told, when the subject is the life and teaching of a great religious teacher and founder. It must be admitted, however, that very little has come of this promise: the "laws" are not nearly so self-evident as one might have expected. (3) As for the process by which the tradition was handed down, the analysis of material shows that the gospel narratives, anecdotes, parables and sayings were told, not in order to provide biographical data for a literary and historically-minded later generation, but in order to answer the felt needs of the early Christians themselves. What was told and retold, remembered and handed on, was what answered the immediate questions and solved the vexatious problems of Jesus' followers after his departure. It is one special merit of Form Criticism that it is not exclusively a study of literary development, but throws light upon the social and religious situation in which the early tradition was handed down. It enables us to visualize the teachers of the Early Church engaged at their task, and in imagination to look in upon, and to share, the early Christian services of worship, to feel the tension of early Christian life, and to share the problems faced by those earliest followers of "the Way." There is a fine little book by Professor Karl Kundsinn, of Riga, *Primitive Christianity in the Light of Gospel Research* (unfortunately not yet published in English translation), in which the positive data for primitive church history, brought to light by Form Criticism, are clearly and succinctly set forth. It shows how our knowledge of the earliest Palestinian Church, its outlook and aims, its faith and hope and expectation, its customs and its problems, is widened by a careful study of its traditions of Jesus. The Gospels thus become a source, or rather a collection of various source-materials, for the life of the Early Church, as well as for the life of Jesus. Indeed, as the late Professor Ernest Burch, of Garrett, was wont to say, "The Gospels are primary sources for the history of the Early Church, and secondary sources for the life of Christ." More-

over, the place of the Gospels in the development of Christian thought and belief, and the general trustworthiness of their contents (however partial and fragmentary), became much clearer. The subjects of the controversies in Mark, and the problems faced by the early Christian communities in Palestine, and even in the Gentile world outside, may be fairly well made out—fasting, eating with “sinners,” keeping the Sabbath, marriage and divorce, the coming of “Elijah,” Jesus’ authority and power, civil obedience and the Roman tribute, the Parousia and the Resurrection—all these were clearly subjects of discussion and of controversy. *Why* just these traditions were handed down, in one cycle or strand of the tradition, seems clear: it is because they were still vital issues in the forties, fifties, and sixties. Still other questions at issue may be noted: the true leaders of the church (must they be members of Jesus’ own family, or perhaps *autoptai*, “eye-witnesses” of the Lord?); the authority of the apostles; the claims of the followers of John the Baptist; the *date* of the Return of Christ in Glory; the question of martyrdom (was resistance “unto death” to be required of *all* Christ’s followers?); and so on. If I may be pardoned the reference, the chapter on Mark in my recent *Growth of the Gospels* endeavors to sum up this situation.

For example, let us take such a passage as Matthew 8. 18-22 (“The foxes have holes . . .”). The parallel in Luke 9. 57-62 shows that the passage belonged to Q, and suggests that originally there were *three* related sayings: what Dibelius would call a Collection or Compilation (that is, in Q). Why were these particular sayings preserved, and preserved *together*? Because they were incidents of one particular day? Not necessarily. The editorial settings, in Matthew and Luke, entirely diverge, and may be set aside; older Synoptic critics would attribute the settings to the authors of the Gospels; Form Critics will allow that they may have been added to the pericopes in the course of oral transmission. But why were they preserved, and in this form? Because, undoubtedly, they answered the question that was still asked, say in the forties and fifties, What is the *cost* of following Jesus? Must one abandon everything else—houses, lands, home, parents, kindred, as in another well-known saying—or may one continue to fulfill his family and domestic obligations (as the famous “Corban” saying at least implied)? The answer seems to be, One must give up all to follow Jesus. But the very *form* of the saying, “The Son of man hath not where to lay his head,” suggests a current proverb, paralleled

in Greek, Arab, Hindu, and other traditional wisdom, one that stressed the homelessness of man upon the earth—as in Goethe's lines,

Nur ein trüber Gast
Auf der dunklen Erde.

And if so, may not some such proverb have crept into the oral tradition, and thus have come to be ascribed to Jesus? At least it may be viewed as a later reflection upon Jesus' experience, scarcely his own observation; and it tallies ill with the picture drawn by L, and even by Mark: Jesus a guest in the homes of his disciples and friends. In brief, what we have here is more a reflection of conditions in the Early Church, in days when persecution and ostracism were common, than a stenographic record of specific sayings of the Lord. At least, that is the suggestion of Form Criticism.

Or take the Great Rejoicing (Luke 10. 21-22), and the following Macarism (vv. 23-24). Though doubtless from Q, Matthew separates them, and this makes it appear that Luke 10. 23a ("And turning to the disciples . . .") is an editorial addition—though a most obvious one. But how much of the saying is quotation or adaptation of an Old Testament passage (Sirach 51. 1; see other references in the margin of Nestle, for example); and how much of it is, in *form*, due to some current (but hypothetical!) Wisdom-Apocalypse—if there ever was such a work? One may go on indefinitely along the line of such a speculation without ever reaching a definite conclusion. A surer test is to compare the actual "form" of the saying before us with other sayings of Jesus—including, perhaps, some from the fourth Gospel. Thus we see that there is a real problem here; and one that perchance Form Criticism may help us toward solving.

Or take the two passages immediately following, in Luke, The Great Commandment and the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Do they belong together? Luke knits them together with his verse 29, but not with entire success: the question, "Who is my neighbor?" receives no answer. What Jesus gives is something far more—and answers an unasked question, What is the *spirit* in which the Great Commandment requires to be observed? Loisy long ago taught us to look for "sutures" between the units of tradition incorporated in the Gospels; and evidently here is one of them. For my part, I think Luke 10. 30-37 followed 9. 51-56, in L; and that the original connection was different—something about Samaritans. Further, it is a question whether a study of form has anything to offer us on the

Parable. The reply of Jesus in verse 37, "Go and do thou likewise," seems to be far too penetrating, too life-like a saying to be an echo of verse 28. And the motive, pure neighborliness, has quite eclipsed the inquiry which verse 25 began: "How shall I gain eternal life?"

IV

Perhaps these are not fair illustrations. They are taken more or less at random. But certainly they do suggest certain cautions. We must not expect too much from Form Criticism. It is a tool, and a useful one. But no tool is serviceable for every purpose—except a Boy Scout knife. One does not ordinarily use a chisel when a plane is wanted, or vice versa, if he is a wise workman. Form Criticism is useful, up to a limit. And it may be worth while, in conclusion, to offer certain cautions that seem to be suggested even by as superficial a study of the method as the present one.

1. Form Criticism is really valuable for historical purposes, and we ought not to accuse the critics of dragging in historical judgments under the guise of literary. Nevertheless, not everyone is qualified to pursue Form Criticism. It takes a highly skilled literary critic to detect the "forms," and not every exegete is prepared for this task. Too many of us lack a sufficient gift of imagination, and a sensitive ear. Mere ability to read Greek and German does not entitle one to pose as a form critic! One must possess a sixth sense, cultivated through years of steeping the mind in literature and in historical sources. Even then he may err! The canons of criticism are not those that commend themselves at once to the man in the street, and a majority vote is of no use. Fortunately, however, the Christian religion does not stand or fall upon the verdict of literary—or even of historical—criticism.

2. At the same time, and by the same token, we cannot make Form Criticism a short and simple criterion of historical authenticity. A "later" document, or a later "form" of a saying, may be more valuable than an earlier: as witness the similar phenomenon in textual history, where some of the best witnesses to certain types of text are manuscripts of far later date.

Occasionally we are able to distinguish, on the basis of form, a narrative or teaching piece as almost purely Hellenistic (that is, the product of the Hellenistic Church), rather than purely Aramaic or Hebraic (that is, the product of some Palestinian Jewish-Christian circle and perhaps Gali-

lean in origin); yet even here we are not on absolutely certain ground. For (a) the piece may conceivably have got handed down by some circuitous route, to be finally written out only in a wholly modified form, and yet be in all essentials entirely authentic. Content, rather than form, is the really important criterion.

For example, Arrian's speeches of Alexander have an amazing appropriateness—almost too much of this quality. Still, Hellenistic historians used sources, and Arrian's included memoirs by Generals of Alexander and by others who had seen and heard the Conqueror. The stretch of time lying between Arrian's hero and himself, and that between Jesus and the earliest evangelical documents, or even the evangelists, are all out of proportion to each other. Nevertheless, in view of the consequences (for example, the actual course of battles, campaigns, political maneuvers), and also of the widespread interest in the story of Alexander (that is, the *tradition*), something very much like most of these speeches must have been actually uttered by him—though we grant the "form" is later. *Mutatis mutandis*, and *a fortiori*, the same may be true of certain gospel narratives in "late" form.

In the second place, (b) it looks as if the Hellenistic wing of the church was present almost from the start, and was not so much a later development (resulting, say, from Paul's missionary work) as an essential part of and party in the church, even in Jerusalem, from earliest days. After all, the story of Stephen comes near the beginning of the book of Acts—not to mention the group at Pentecost. Paul's Gospel, moreover, *presupposes* the Hellenists—as Bousset, Lietzmann, and others have shown. Further, we know, from all the evidence, that Palestine was fairly cosmopolitan in the first century—especially, perhaps, the coast, from Cæsarea down, where if anywhere the material labeled "L" and its cognate material in Acts is to be localized—the most "Hellenistic" gospel stratum outside John. Still further, there were divergent types within Jewish Hellenism, as there were within more orthodox Judaism: the Christianized Jewish Hellenism lying back of Matthew is very different from that back of L and the first half of Acts. Once again, it is much more the content, rather than the form, that enables us to identify a piece as "Hellenistic"—and how can we turn about and make form the criterion of historical trustworthiness? The process of historical criticism is far more involved than some persons assume, and the task harder; Form Criticism helps, but only a total view of

the whole picture is going to lead us in the end to the goal of our quest, namely, the answer to the question, What really happened in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago?

3. Is it so certain that the gospel tradition originally circulated in separate units? One might infer this from Papias' famous remarks about Peter's preaching—which apply to the Gospel of Mark. Nevertheless, real sequences are to be seen in Mark—not always very extensive—as for example in the opening sections: Jesus' Day in Capernaum. And sequences are certainly evident in Q and L, especially if we take Luke's order as the more probable: a point I have tried to prove in *The Growth of the Gospels*, Chapter IV. Some of these may very well go back to the oral tradition.

It is true, Dibelius admits one extended sequence—the Passion Narrative—but it is almost the only one. "A continuous narrative of the Life or even the Work of Jesus, which might be compared with a literary biography or with the Life of one of the Saints, simply did not exist at first. The stories we find in the Synoptic Gospels . . . were originally isolated, and were handed on as separate units. The popular tradition contained in the Gospels affords us Paradigms, 'Novels,' and Legends, but no continuous account of the work of Jesus."²

4. Form-differences are easily exaggerated, as Professor Easton has amply demonstrated (see his *Gospel Before the Gospels*, p. 74; Taylor, *Formation*, p. 31). And it is still an open question if classification solely in accordance with "form" gets us very far beyond the main, general conclusion that *some* forms were more suitable for preaching, others for private instruction, others for worship, others for debate with adversaries. Even here the appropriateness may be too heavily underscored. What matters most is the subject, not the form. A preacher may well quote some lines from Tennyson or Browning in lieu of a formal prose argument, in order to carry a point in his sermon. Would the use of poetry prove the passage an interpolation into the sermon? Think of Studdert Kennedy, and how he closed his sermons more than once with poems of his *own*!

5. Communities transmit tradition; they do not, as a rule, create it. It is a perilous inference that because a particular saying or anecdote met the need of the Early Church, therefore the church—or some "prophet"—produced it. Most Form Critics do not go this far; and Bultmann does so only on occasion. We admit the inference may be inescapable, in some

² *Formgeschichte*, second edition, p. 178. Tübingen: Mohr, 1933.

connections: for example, some of the sayings in the Little Apocalypse (Mark 13) and elsewhere. But it is a dangerous one, nonetheless, and ought never to be resorted to unless there is no other way out.

6. It is by no means certain that there are "laws" governing the formation of tradition; or if there are, they are so obvious one might caricature them and say, "If this is the kind of story you are going to tell, this is how you will tell it"—the manner of telling being identical with the story-form. An apothegm is always an apothegm, whether Greek or Aramaic or English. A story of a healing is usually told in one sequence: gravity of the case, means used for cure, results. But what light does that throw upon the *substance* of the narrative? Or what proof is it of a "development" in the tradition?

Moreover, as Professor E. F. Scott has pointed out in a recent number of the *Harvard Theological Review*, most of the "forms" turn out, upon examination, to be "mixed forms"—a fact which Gunkel noted in his study of Old Testament legends. If there are really "laws" at work here, they must be very recondite and their operation difficult to detect! Of course the form-critical movement is new, and the classification-schemes are not yet unanimously agreed upon; but at least the categories should be clearly established before we begin to speak of "laws" governing the different types of material! At the same time, it is true of all literature that *Mischformen* are common; and yet one does not hesitate to speak of the modern "short story" as a type.

Nevertheless, though we may not be prepared to go the whole way with our friends, we must not fail to express our gratitude to them for pointing out factors and qualities, uses and values in the evangelic tradition that we might otherwise have overlooked. And we cannot but admire scholars who, not content with reconstructing the primitive sources lying behind the Gospels, are pressing on to recover, if possible, the form—or forms—in which the tradition existed before ever it got committed to written documents.

Our Christian Morality

IRL GOLDWIN WHITCHURCH

ONE of the extraordinary shafts of light in Lippmann's *Preface to Morals* points out that "Churches have devoted themselves not so much to making real conversions, as to governing the dispositions of the unconverted multitude." There are, of course, churches and churches. It is, moreover, not true that the work of governing the dispositions of the unconverted multitude, whether inside or outside the church, is what the better churches set out to do. The more enlightened do not think of their job in those terms. All this may be granted, however, without meeting the point of Lippmann's statement. There is something so genially pertinent about the charge that it cannot be ignored, least of all by churchmen who care for the future of organized religion.

For purposes of this discussion I should like the privilege of making two restrictions. First, by conversion I take it we mean moral transformation. The measure of a man's conversion is taken by the moral norms to which he gives intelligent and active support or personal commitment. Second, since one is presumed to have some personal knowledge of his subject I wish to consider the problem in reference to churches broadly classed as Protestant.

At the beginning there are those who would raise a question of fact. Is it the case that churches are composed largely of unconverted people? For reasons we need now consider, no categorical answer to that question is possible, but that the percentage of the unconverted is too high to make for religious health is a fact quite beyond dispute. It is with this undubitable part of the assertion that we are concerned. We want to know, if possible, *why* the ugly fact is here, and *how* conditions may be improved. An answer to the first part of the problem is more imperative. For if the why side of the situation can be understood, a solution will be, at least, on the way. Suppose that an attack on the problem is made through a consideration of the following explanation: Our churches are composed too largely of the unconverted because Protestant Christianity has no distinctive ethics to offer its constituents. Put bluntly, a truly Christian ethics is only in the making. I use the term ethics rather than morality, because I wish to emphasize that

our malady is not merely an occasional slip in practice. It is rather a lack of distinctive moral principles upon which alone an intelligent and consistent moral practice can be grounded. On every hand one meets the assumption that Christians are in possession of distinctive and dependable moral principles, and that our main weakness lies in an unwillingness to apply those principles. In my opinion, that assumption is dead wrong at both points, but well nigh co-extensive with Protestantism. On first glance it seems little short of the absurd to question whether a really Christian ethics is available for those who want to become whole Christians. Look first of all at the stream of Christian history. As a matter of fact is there a body of distinctive moral principles that forms the core of a common life of the church? If so, What are they? Or you may think, as many do, that the absence of such a common moral tradition is an advantage. I cannot now turn aside to argue the case. Christian is also used in a second sense as a qualifying adjective and means true. Thus a Christian ethics not only describes a mode of living, but claims to be true, adequate, valid, and so deserving of acceptance as a norm. Where in modern religious outlook can be found a statement of such an ethics? Is the need for such a statement widely felt? Meanwhile let us recall an introductory statement in E. F. Scott's *Ethical Teaching of Jesus* as a summary of the Protestant position.

"The unchanging element in our religion has been its ethical teaching. Its doctrines have been differently understood in each generation; its institutions and ritual have assumed many forms and have given rise to countless divisions. But the ethical demands have never varied. They were set forth two thousand years ago, and in the interval the whole framework of man's life has been remodeled; but they are still valid, in practically their whole extent, for all sections of the church."

Can Christian leaders longer simply take it for granted that two thousand years ago the Christian Church inherited a valid system of moral principles and has held them in clear perspective through the centuries? Are Christians sometimes tempted to reverse that order and incautiously argue from what moral standards we have to their originality and sufficiency? More likely still, men often reason from our desperate need of a dependable ethics to the unimpeachable character of the moral standards that are now approved. The situation is not simple, but the main issue must not be lost to view. If it is true that churches only presume to have but do not possess a truly Christian ethics, our Protestantism is found wanting in one

of two essential elements of the Christian religion. Properly understood Christianity has two inseparable aspects. It is a faith *and* a practice, a creed or body of convictions about the nature of things *and* an expression of those convictions in a good life. Religion for us is constituted by a faith in God and a way of life with men. These aspects are like the inside and the outside of a cup. You never have one without the other. And right before our eyes churches are allowing these inseparables to be divorced. It is sorry consolation to acknowledge that the case has been so from the beginnings of the Christian movement, because the separation of religious faith from moral ideals has meant neglect of one or the other, if not mutilation of both. In New Testament times the book of *James* flays those one-sided Christians who loudly proclaimed their *faith* and failed to show corresponding *works*. The writer's own definition of religion is clearly lopsided. Following the Apostolic age that specialized in righteous love as the way of living there comes the creed-building era of the Fathers. More recently, Protestantism found its watchword in salvation by faith, in reaction to a restricted emphasis upon salvation by works. It appears that keeping the faith and the moral sides of religion in balance is a feat beset with endless difficulties. One-sidedness hangs like the sword of Damocles and imperils the individual Christian as much as movements within church history. For faith that is uncorrected by a critical morality shrinks in the direction of irrational and irrelevant platitudes. Morality apart from a rational faith withers until its mores become a vague collection of conventional requirements observed for sentimental reasons. Truth in religion is always smothered by an unbalanced tenure of its belief and moral aspects.

The predicament of Christian churches that are lacking in a distinctive ethics, though claiming to be the institutional expression of a religious movement with two thousand years of history, is partially understood in relation to our Protestant heritage. As a movement Protestantism specialized in the faith side of religion, meaning by faith a set of beliefs by which one apprehends divine things. In witness to this are the theological systems of Luther and Calvin, the contemptuous dogmatism of eighteenth-century Deism, the hide-bound creeds of numerous modern sects that set out to save the fundamentals of the faith. Always there have been, to be sure, counter currents of thought: Wesleyanism, that made a primary demand for rebirth in moral living; Kantianism, that reversed the traditional order and made religious faith dependent upon moral insight and practice; a one-

sided romanticism that found voice in Matthew Arnold's "Religion is morality touched with emotion." Yet, in the main stream of Protestantism, religion is faith in God, and the good life is a by-product. Its central theme can be found in the grandiose declaration that "faith is the foundation and inspiring principle of morality." Barthianism is an extreme form in reiteration of this point. As a rule, whenever and wherever Protestantism bestirs itself it harks back to its traditional schema. Consider a recent example. F. R. Barry begins his book, *Christianity and the New World*, by recognizing in the moral chaos of our time the most serious impediment to Christianity. He knows church history and is aware of the uncertain way in which faith and morals have been adjusted. Our hopes rise until we hear him declare that "We cannot reconstruct Christian ethics save on the basis of Christian faith." By the acceptance of this safe tradition he apparently allows a grain of truth to serve as a screen for two unsound dogmas. One is that morality is paralyzed and can do nothing until a system of dogmatics has been established. All history disclaims such a one-way dependence of morality upon religion. A second contention is even less defensible, for it implies that if an acceptable system of dogmatics is found the work of ethics is already done. Of course, religion and morality are mutually implicated, but it is a very different thing to solve that relationship by an uncritical acceptance of a false tradition. Is it true that Christian morality is a way of living that exudes from one who has acceptable theological beliefs? Is ethics only a statement of the practical implications of a doctrinal system, in the making of which some of the best moral insights of the race have not been considered?

Here and there among churches is one that is making notable contributions toward a deeper and more valid moral outlook. A prophetic leadership finds shelter and nourishment within the institution. These men of rare moral insight and courage are the lights on our horizon. For the remainder one can only say that they are blind guides crying in the night. They walk by a faith that is unaware of a need for better moral insight. Morals are a mere adjunct to faith, platitudes in which the worth of the ends of action are left obscure. As a consequence our Christian morality is vague and chaotic. It is conventional and lacks distinctive content. Christian ethics means anything, and nothing. It has as much or as little system and relevance as the particular collection of doctrinal beliefs with which it is associated. Consider a few examples. Just a century ago the great

Protestant Schleiermacher wrote: "The Christian doctrine of morals should be the presentation of communion with God which is conditioned by communion with Christ the Redeemer, so far as it is the motive of all acts of the Christian—that manner of action which proceeds from the supremacy of the Christian religious self-consciousness." If the theological jargon be omitted or rather translated, what does morality mean? Simply that anybody who sincerely professes communion with God in Christ is straightway equipped with a sound moral understanding. That is subjectivism. Has a hundred years improved this situation? According to Dean Inge, foremost among Protestant religious leaders, a Christian ethics deals with the moral insights of Jesus, Paul and Saint John. Quite so, but what are these insights? Can they safely be left to the keeping of vague tradition, without critical investigation and exposition? Is each Christian free to select or construct his own version? The Dean knows history. And there he finds at least two other brands of Christian ethics. One is a mediæval ascetic morality, which Friedrich Paulsen portrays as the accepted Christian view. The other is an indefinite stream of a traditional moral practice, modified by economic and political conditions, dating especially from the Renaissance. From writers such as Tawney and Weber we learn that Protestant ethics has assimilated an assortment of Utilitarian maxims that promise economic success in a capitalistic society. Its ancestry reaches back to a group of early Utilitarians who in the latter part of the eighteenth century set out to apply to human society the principles and outlook of Newtonian physics. Its foundations are laid in a Hartleian sense psychology, in *Laissez Faire* economic and political theories, and in a materialistic philosophy. After grafting a few changes upon this moral tradition John Stuart Mill maintained that it embodied the complete spirit of the ethics of Jesus of Nazareth, and a fair majority of modern Christians have agreed with Mill on this point. To-day the common idea of Christian morality is as definite and compelling as the notion of an oblong blur. Wherever it takes on specific content it is likely to be un-Christian, whether the term be taken in a descriptive or a normative sense. Under these conditions a complaint about the impotence of Christian morality is unjustified because meaningless. An expectation that such a morality should bring order and enlightenment to the urgent problems of human conduct is on a par with that of the man who looked for a duckling from a swan's egg.

Actually Christian ethics is a variety of group moralizations more or

less loosely tied to a theology. How has this heritage been perpetuated? What are its special supports? Four of them deserve careful consideration. In the first place, modern religious leadership is unaware of the situation that confronts us. Some doubt whether our ecclesiastics could remedy the situation if they knew about it. That is a controversial matter of vast importance, but I leave it for others to decide. One thing is beyond dispute. The problem cannot be solved apart from a leadership that is aware of the problem and of its proportions. With due reserve it can be said that our actual leadership is not yet aware of its existence. Consider a few indications. Take, for instance, the requirements that are recognized in ministerial training. To begin with, there is the host of ministers whose educational training does not reach beyond the grades. What can be expected of them beyond the echoing of conventional moral opinions on a restricted set of issues that happen to belong to a particular tradition? As a help in this situation one of the more progressive branches of Protestantism has prescribed a course of study for all ministerial candidates that are not both college and seminary graduates. The course is revised every four years, and this reference is to the list from 1932. Of fifty requirements for a five-year course, one book on ethics is depended on to do the colossal job of awakening these inadequately trained men to the issues of the good life and of training them to be moral leaders in their several communities. As compared with biblical and doctrinal books the ratio is about ten to one. Of course various kinds of materials on the good life are found in these other books and requirements. That defense is well made. It only accentuates the fact that we are willing to have morals treated as an incidental within a religious outlook. Ethics is a tail on a doctrinal kite. Passing now to curricula of theological seminaries, what do we find? First, the surprise that it is less than a quarter century since ethics has come to general recognition. Even then it is moored to some safe field in good paternalistic fashion. Of the courses offered two types predominate. One type deals with so-called individual ethics, and is largely a rehearsal of inherited moral opinions. The other type, more common in liberal seminaries, is concerned with a technique for dealing with acute social diseases, such as: strikes, wage disputes, housing conditions, etc. Here economics and sociology are sprinkled with holy water and become social ethics. Both types of approach are scuttled from the beginning by a false assumption that ethics can be either individual or social, because its founda-

tions are deeper than these abstractions. In neither approach is the moral issue raised on its own merits. What is especially significant is that all this has come about apart from any deliberate plan. We have drifted into this course and are therefore more complacently at home in these surroundings. Consequently from our seminaries are coming men aflame with enthusiasm for building the good life on earth, but their understanding of moral issues must depend upon infiltrations of light from commonsense maxims and conventional moral norms. Is it surprising that they rarely stand for long in respect of moral leadership apart from mine-run ecclesiastics whose energies are spent in "carrying out programs" and keeping the home fires crackling? Can the ministry be expected to supplement its primary training with periodical declarations of principles such as "The Social Creed" or with occasional conferences on important problems? To these activities of the virile minorities within organized Christianity the churches point with just pride. In reality they are but raw materials with which a critical ethics might profitably begin work, broken lights of an illumination that long since should have become the focal point of a Christian heritage. These fragments of an ethics-in-the-making cannot take the place of a balanced training.

The second factor in making ethics an adjunct to a theology is a deadly assumption that has become an invariable part of our religious tradition. It is that a sincere profession of Christian faith forthwith supplies a knowledge of how to live the good life. The only possibility of moral failure lies in neglecting to do what we know is right, as if some automatic revelation had supplied a moral understanding as a correlate to religious faith. Now this opinion relies upon a misreading of a complex and significant fact in moral experience. The assumption will not, therefore, bear examination. Good intentions are not a guarantee of intelligent living. That they are is a capital delusion among professing Christians. Churchmen do not see that a sincerely religious faith may be and often is coupled with moral illiteracy. Christians are often blind to appalling injustices at their door. Sharp business practices, slander, envy, vulgarity, betrayal of confidence, evasion of contractual obligations, gaining one's ends through flattery of petty authorities, obstructing the claims of justice, and being oblivious to the higher demands of the good life—such are not uncommon practices among Christians. Who will say that all this flies in the face of clear and adequate knowledge of moral principles? Some of it is born of a devastat-

ing ignorance, a part of which is not altogether unpardonable. Casual observation alone discloses a bewildering complexity of conditions which we face. To take for granted that without thought one will stumble into the good life looks much like a stupidity that is chained to bad custom. Christians must be convinced of the danger of moral illiteracy and of the obligation to become morally intelligent. It should be made abundantly clear that moral leadership cannot be expected from a source where the problem of intelligent moral living has never been consciously raised, where good intentions are substituted for accurate analysis of the moral situation. Sheer moral traditionalism is enough to disqualify for leadership. It is the main reason why moral practices and standards of ministers and church leaders are scarcely distinguishable from laymen whose professions are immensely more modest. The plain fact is that a moral criterion is seldom the basis for identifying Christians. Presuming to obtain a moral understanding as a correlate of faith they drift along on the level of the morally commonplace. Moral failure springs not alone from weakness of an abstract will, but rather is it rooted in an inveterate ignorance that permeates the whole personality. For in speaking of a weak will one is only making a polite reference to a defective mentality.

The full cost of moral traditionalism has not yet been estimated. It mounts with a third element which we must now consider. A Christianity that sleeps on in the supposition that a sincere profession of faith in God automatically prepares one to live the good life with men is in time forced into an unconscious treachery. For, in the exigencies of our world, faith must become practical. In so doing its moral side inevitably obtains actual content. Action establishes specific points of contact. The "will of God" is forced to take on definite meaning. Then, what happens for the Christian? The unconscious luggage from his moral tradition is his one resource. His commonsense moral traditions are dressed up in religious authority. They supply definite content to the so-called will of God. *Mores* are taken to be morally valid standards. They are baptized and made holy. A Christian mantle is thrown over them. Presto! Commonplace moral opinions assimilate the prestige that properly belongs only to valid moral ideals, and are not Christian moral ideals true and worthy of acceptance? Throughout these steps the deception is as subtle as it is complete. Exigencies of conduct thus become a fountain of lies. Both history and observation show that scarcely any major vice has, at some time, failed to obtain

approval of Christian consciences. In the fifteenth century the good Bishop Las Cassus was so mortified by the high death rate of the enslaved West Indians that he pled to have the robust Negroes of Africa substituted for the feeble natives. At first the slaves were conveyed *via* Europe, where they might be "Christianized" before being forwarded to the colonies. This procedure is not to be explained away by reference to the decadent times. In his *History of European Morals*, Lecky writes of the first Christian emperor who established an empire that derived its ethical practices solely from Christian sources. That Byzantine Empire "constitutes, with scarcely an exception, the most thoroughly base and despicable form that civilization has yet assumed." It was pre-eminently an age of treachery. The moral sense of the early Christian movement was arrested because its energy had been diverted into creed building and into political intrigue. On occasion, commonplace moral opinions, sordid ideals, and infamous ends have been taken up and proclaimed the will of God. Bernard, said to have been the holiest man of his century, gave full approval to the Crusades. Wars, he said, were the penances that God had imposed upon the faithful. "Hasten then to expiate your sins by victories over the infidels. . . . Cursed be he who does not stain his sword with blood." And has time wrought miracles on Christian consciences? In the last quarter of the nineteenth century there appeared a two-volume work on *Christian Ethics*. Hear Bishop Martenson on the same subject: "The combatant should know that he is serving a divine ordinance. It is not his business to investigate whether the war in which he is fighting is a just or an unjust one. The responsibility lies with those who have resolved upon war. His concern is to show fidelity and bravery. . . . It is, however, a delusion to suppose that war can ever be abolished, for then we must know how to banish sin and injustice from the world." Comparison of the conscientious utterances of churchmen in our own times on this and related issues is open to those who are interested. One only needs to scan the volume, *Preachers Present Arms*. It appears that consciences of modern churchmen run true to form, and that form is to be a sounding board for the more respectable conventional moral standards. Semi-critical norms are readily dignified as the will of God.

Any attempt to account for the backward and illusory rôle of Christian ethics in modern life must take the measure of still another important influence. It comes from association with a commonly accepted dogma that

human beings are governed by their feelings, not by rational principles. If so, a science of the good life is useless, if not impossible. An attempt to understand why men act as they do can concern only a disinterested spectator. A participant in the course of affairs knows that men are guided by preferences and by tact, and not by principles. Politicians and churchmen glory in this ambiguous half-truth. Since the days of Schleiermacher religionists have shared in a distrust of reason and have stressed the place of emotion in human action, but the historical context of his outlook is forgotten. It is one thing to recognize the deficiencies of reason in the narrow sense of an analytical intellectualism of the eighteenth-century enlightenment, and quite another to repudiate all rational processes in favor of a pre-critical emotionalism. It is unfortunately the case that too much of human affairs are carried on at the level of elementary feeling reactions. But the moment that intense and vivid emotions are accepted as normative in place of reason, the ideas of objectivity and truth become meaningless. In the last analysis, whim is a distressing version of a human mode of life. Yet if one takes the position that human action not only is but should be governed by its pre-rational inheritance, he is quite beyond the reach of reasoning. Arbitrary choice can be recorded, but not convicted. Certain actions and attitudes have doubtless habitually evoked feelings of approval and disapproval. But the occurrence of an event is no criterion of its worth. That is another and different issue. Ought these actions and attitudes to be approved? If men understood all the conditions of moral health and growth, would they then approve them? The first problem is one of describing an event. The second entails an examination of its significance or worth. In an uncritical outlook these two questions are frequently confused. The morally right is commonly identified with the socially approved. Ethics becomes an attempt to systematize the *ethos* or customs of a people. Let a few titles illustrate this double meaning of terms. Ward's *Our Economic Morality* discusses an *immoral* economic ethic and assumes that a valid ethics is a common inheritance. Tausch in *Policy and Ethics in Business* insists that a socially approved set of business standards are morally good. Each book in its own way centers upon values that are suffused by high-tension feelings. Neither accepts the responsibility for the labor of trying to discover a rationally grounded system of values.

Doubtless enough has been said to indicate why a really Christian ethic has not been developed. These four tendencies combine to limit our

Christian ethic to an authoritarian traditionalism. Its works declare its nature. What of chattel slavery in America? Did the Christian conscience initially condemn slavery as morally wrong or only echo its condemnation here and there when outside voices had pointed the way? Was the Eighteenth Amendment written into the Constitution by an enlightened Christian conscience or did our consciences first approve what shrewd business men said about the effect of alcoholic drinks upon efficiency in production? As a matter of fact do Christians, on their own account, have a superior insight as to the moral implications of important contemporary problems? Despite extravagant claims sometimes made for Christian leadership, the modern Christian conscience is conveniently acclimated to its world. Dominated as it has been by a one-sided religious tradition, Christian morality is mostly a name for commonplace maxims. Their hold upon us is due primarily to an emotionalized attitude toward them because perforce they are part of the accessories of our religion. Much of this kind of authoritarianism has its roots in a deep distrust of the capacities of common people. The rationalization process runs about as follows: Religion is meant for men of all conditions and stations in life. It gives moral tone to the community. Feelings are the one universal human language, but they must be guided. Respect for an authoritative word is therefore the golden chain by which the morals of the masses must be safely anchored. This religious climate is accurately portrayed by a prominent teacher who wrote recently that religious experience for the wash-woman and the scholar is in all essentials identical. Not only is religion rooted primarily, if not exclusively, in the feeling side of human nature, but this view disregards the fact that rationality in the best sense is a tender plant that grows only on the more distinctive altitudes of human experience. Authoritarianism generates just such blindness. The distance between the churches and certain signs of real moral progress is growing, and the hour of their choice is not far away.

Perhaps there are those who say that in serving as an amplifier of socially approved moral ideals an authoritarian Christian morality fulfills itself. Especially if the ends are worthy; for instance, in the better standards of economic justice and international good will, the work of extending their audience is altogether commendable. But is giving a stamp of approval upon ends *because* they are in favor (shades of the Eighteenth Amendment!) a sufficient justification? At any rate, that is not what the churches claim to be doing. Besides it appears that giving publicity to

approved moral ideals is not enough because moral authoritarianism leaves unraised the important question, namely: What about the excellence or validity of the proposed ideal? Until men are assured on this point a high and sustained loyalty will never be forthcoming. Until then the tides of religious devotion will ebb and flow with the seasons of secularity. Religion is supposed to set out moral ideals whose authenticity is certified by a distinctive insight. What actually happens is that an unexamined conventional morality, disguised by religious sanctions, obtains the rating of fully attested standards. Thus by subterfuge religious loyalty is constantly exploited by projects that are ephemeral and thoroughly secular. Yet neither the actual impotence of our Christian morality nor the humbug perpetrated upon it has sufficed to open our eyes. Our blindness has become traditional. Its chronic nature is nowhere more clearly exemplified than in revivals of religious interest, whether it be the Reformation or more recent movements. Their one recurrent feature is the pathetic manner in which religious revivals mark the return to safe theological and institutional landmarks. The accent rarely falls directly upon the need for radical moral transformation. This whole procedure of revivals is at once the way of desperation and of ease. Of desperation because it takes a short cut to religious certainty through appeal to a revered external authority. At the same time the costly process of personal moral regeneration is avoided. Conventional morality is inexpensive. Even a desperate credo can have its tenets conveniently arranged in a private sanctuary of the inner life. Beliefs about divine things, like regalia cherished for occasional use, are detached from one's person with notorious ease and held at arm's length. Usually they serve to pre-empt the sense of need for genuine moral reformation.

Who can tell? Perhaps in the near future authoritarianism will be sufficiently dislodged to permit religion to enter upon its rightful heritage of partnership with a high moral understanding. Religious faith then will set out on an open road of moral practice and provide itself with an ideology that will lift its so-called idealism above the level of fanatical devotion to unexamined ends. Its ideals of conduct will be lighted by a morally mature insight. Once again it may be written that the pure in heart see God clearly.

Rethinking Ministerial Education

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN

I. ORIGIN AND SETTING OF THE STUDY

THE four substantial volumes which are the occasion of the present article are significant not merely as marking the conclusion of a nine-years' period of study but as symptomatic of a change of attitude on the part of theological teachers which may have large promise for the future.

Nearly sixteen years ago, at the invitation of President Lawrence Lowell, a group of theological teachers met at Harvard University for an informal discussion of the problems facing those who were responsible for the education of the ministry in the post-war period. More than forty different institutions were represented. Those who came were of many different denominations and of widely different theological viewpoint. But they met under the shadow of a common need and their discussions were unusually frank and to the point. As a result of their deliberations it was decided to form a Conference of Theological Seminaries, membership in which should be open to all institutions of recognized standing which desired to join and which were approved by the Conference. Sixty-four institutions in the United States and Canada are now members.

During the sixteen years of its existence the Conference has done much to introduce the representatives of the different theological tendencies to one another, to deepen their sense of common tasks and common responsibility, and to clear away misunderstandings which make co-operation difficult. This growing sense of unity took definite form in 1924 in the decision to undertake a co-operative study of ministerial education for the purpose of laying the foundation in assured fact for concerted action.

It was realized from the start that if the study was to have the needed scientific standing, outside professional help was essential. Accordingly, negotiations were entered into with the Institute of Social and Religious Research and after some years given to preliminary exploration of the field, the co-operation of the Institute was secured and the study formally launched in December of 1929.

Thus the study differs from other studies in the field of professional education in that it is a co-operative enterprise. It is not a study by the seminaries alone, nor by the Institute alone, but a joint undertaking in which each of the contributing partners supplies its share—the seminaries giving access to materials otherwise inaccessible and furnishing the services of volunteer workers not otherwise to be secured, the Institute providing the personnel and the technique to utilize the materials and the service thus made available. This dual relationship appears in the organization of the study, the Institute being represented by Professor Mark A. May as Director, the seminaries by Professor William Adams Brown as Theological Consultant.

The study differs further from some other studies in the same field in its broader scope. It is not confined to a study of the educational institutions which train ministers. It includes also a study of the conditions under which their professional task must be performed. In this it parallels closely the important study of medical education just published by a committee headed by President Lowell which also sums up the results of some ten years' work.

The facts disclosed as to the present condition of ministerial education are startling. They show that to serve the two hundred thousand Protestant congregations in the United States there are one hundred and fifty thousand Protestant ministers. Of these, two out of five are graduates neither of college nor seminary. Thus many congregations (some eighty thousand in all, or more than a third of the whole) must depend upon the part-time services of a minister, while of the total number less than a half can furnish the financial support necessary for the maintenance of a fully trained minister.

Not the least significant part of the study is the light which it sheds upon the changes that have taken place in the status of the ministry, the new problems which the minister faces as a result of changes in the educational outlook of his congregation and of the economic conditions on which it must depend for its support. Evidence is given of a growing unrest in the ministry, a sense of helplessness in dealing with pastoral problems, of the need for a guidance and leadership not at present being adequately supplied.

Thus the study has an interest wider than that of the profession immediately concerned. It affects all who are responsible for the leadership

of the church; more than this, all who recognize that religion is an indispensable factor in a healthful and normal national life. In what follows I propose to comment briefly upon the situation which the study reveals, the issues which it raises, and the responsibilities with which it faces those who are responsible for determining the policy of the church.

II. THE SITUATION REVEALED BY THE STUDY

And first of the situation which is revealed. This can be summed up as follows: That as a result of a number of different influences which have been operating during the last generation (to go back no farther) the ministry has been losing its preferred position as one of the three learned professions and must face not only a higher level of education in the congregations to which it ministers but also the competition of trained specialists within the field of pastoral counsel which it has hitherto been inclined to regard as peculiarly its own. At the same time the application of critical methods in the field of religion has deprived many ministers of the sense of possessing a clear-cut gospel and left them to face their increasingly difficult problems in a mood of uncertainty and indecision.

There is nothing new in this. What is new is not the facts disclosed, but their assemblage in convenient and accessible form and the clear presentation of the issues with which their existence confronts the church. The facts concerning the overchurched condition of American Protestantism have long been familiar to students of the contemporary church. At the recent Home Missions Congress in Washington (December, 1932) they were impressively presented. The increase in the number of untrained or ill-trained ministers has long been familiar to those whose duty it has been to deal with ministerial standards. But we doubt whether the total picture has been so convincingly drawn as in this study or the issues which it raises have been more uncompromisingly stated. What we are shown is not the result of chance. It is the inevitable fruitage of a divided Protestantism; and the question whether it will prove possible to deal with it adequately is in the last analysis the question whether, without sacrificing the principle of freedom, the Protestant churches can develop organizing ability to deal with the unprecedented situation with which the post-war world confronts them.

Here the picture is not wholly dark. There are encouraging features, as well as features that are discouraging. For one thing it is to be remem-

bered that the college and seminary are not the only agencies through which the church is educating its ministers. In the Methodist Church (and in this Methodism is representative of a number of other denominations) there exists an elaborate system of adult education (the so-called conference system) through which by a course of required reading, conference, and examination, ministers are being trained while still in service. It is true that those responsible for the system are the first to recognize that it is no adequate substitute for college and seminary training, which they continue to hold up as an ideal. The significant fact is that it is a recognition by the church, which with one conspicuous exception includes the largest number of academically untrained men, of its responsibility for maintaining proper educational standards and that it furnishes a foundation upon which more comprehensive and exacting plans can be built.

Indeed one of the notable features of the report is the indication which it brings that churches and seminaries alike are feeling increased responsibility for adult education. At no point was there greater unanimity than on the duty of the seminary to make provision for helping those ministers who desire to continue their studies after leaving the seminary. Among the most frequent ways in which this is being done are summer schools, conferences, occasional or course lectures, lending libraries, and correspondence schools.

Yet all that has been done thus far is but a drop in the bucket as compared with the great extent of the area which still needs to be cultivated. It is clear that if any real progress is to be made the churches themselves must undertake the task, and this not simply as individual denominations but as part of a concerted plan.

If we ask why the churches are not doing this, the answer is to be found in the weakness of our existing denominational machinery. There is general acceptance of the ideal of a well-trained ministry, even by those churches which, like the Baptists and the Disciples, in the past have been most suspicious of a purely academic education. But there exists no effective way of translating this ideal into fact, because there is no way by which the denomination can control the action of the individual congregation.

This is true to a considerable extent even of the more highly organized denominations like the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians, which in principle at least have the power to maintain high ministerial standards.

When the choice must be made between adhering to the ideal set up and meeting the exigency of some particular individual or congregation, expediency (or what is believed to be so) is too apt to carry the day. Moreover, the ease with which ministers pass from one denomination to another renders the maintenance of uniform standards difficult. Of the larger denominations, only the Lutherans have been able to maintain the standard which they have set for themselves, and this in spite of the fact that they have less power to control the action of the individual congregation than churches of Presbyterian or Episcopal polity.

We are facing here something deep-seated in the American people, namely, the individualistic spirit which up to the present time has been controlling in our national life. We find this spirit active in business, in politics, in the relation of the different sections of the community to one another. It is not strange then that we should find it at work in religion. "In the United States," said a wise student of religious affairs in answer to the question of a friend from the Continent, "we are all congregationalists, even the Roman Catholics."

Yet it will not do to be too disheartened by the existence of this spirit. Properly utilized it may prove an asset rather than a liability. We have seen what can be done to secure common action when there is great leadership even in such fields as business and politics. Why should it not be equally possible in the life of the church?

There are encouraging precedents in what has taken place in the parallel fields of law and of medicine. Here less than a generation ago educational standards were far lower than in the ministry at that time. Yet through the concerted action of individuals and groups without legal authority progress has been made that is little less than revolutionary.

There is no reason why similar results should not be secured in ministerial education. But for this there must be effective leadership. And where shall we look for this leadership if not to those who are responsible for training the ministry of the future, namely, the teachers in our seminaries?

III. THE ATTITUDE OF THE SEMINARY

Here the impression produced by our study is a divided one. To begin with the encouraging features. We find a widespread concern on the part of those responsible for the conduct of our seminaries over the

weaknesses and failures of our present educational methods and a serious purpose to improve them so far as possible. The existence of the present study is the best evidence of this.

When we ask more in detail what form the improvement should take, we find, as is perhaps natural, a widespread difference of opinion. But certain major conclusions stand out as expressing the view of those who have taken the most active part in the study.

First, the judgment that the present seminary curriculum, like that of most professional schools, suffers from over-specialization. The rapid growth of the elective system has resulted in splitting up the curriculum into a number of small courses on a variety of different topics with the result that the student is in danger of graduating with a smattering of many subjects and no real proficiency in any. Moreover, the interest of too many teachers is in the training of specialists rather than in that broad professional training which fits a man for the pastoral service which is the major responsibility of the majority of seminary graduates.

There are two reasons for this rapid growth of specialization: One, the emergence of new needs for which the older curriculum made no provision; the other, the scholar's interest in more intensive cultivation of a highly technical field. It is important to distinguish between these two influences and to deal with the problems which each raises in the appropriate way. This, it is to be feared, many seminaries have not yet done.

So far as subject matter is concerned, there is general agreement that the subjects which in the past have held the central place in the curriculum—the Bible, church history, Christian doctrine, and practical theology—should still furnish the backbone of the curriculum. But there is also very general agreement that the method in which these subjects have been taught needs radical revision. Instead of a number of different detailed courses, there should be certain broad fields or divisions in which the different subjects are grouped according to a definite plan so that the student is furnished with a systematic conspectus of the field to be covered. Within these fields we should distinguish far more clearly than has hitherto been done between the needs of the student who desires a broad introduction to the field of theology as a preparation for the pastoral ministry and that limited group of students who are looking forward to specialized tasks and are ready at once to enter upon advanced study.

Yet it is easier to say that this ought to be done than to know how it

should be done. For one thing the amount of material to be mastered is continually increasing and the need of making some place for it in the curriculum is imperative. Hitherto this has been done by adding new subjects or founding new chairs. With Christian ethics is associated sociology; with practical theology, religious education and the psychology of religion; with church history, Christian missions and comparative religion. Something can be done by regrouping, something by combination. But when all is said, it is clear that no one plan can meet the need of all students and that there must be greater differentiation both in the grouping of students and in the assignment of the faculty. A comprehensive course, largely required, would seem best to fit the needs of the ordinary student looking forward to the pastoral ministry. Beyond this there is room for wide election for graduate students and for men of exceptional ability. Much can be done too through tutorial methods; and where these methods are not practical, by individual counselling.

One significant development is the general recognition of the fact that the responsibility of the seminary is not exhausted by provision for the academic needs of the student, but that in a true sense all his life in the seminary should be regarded as part of his prospective training. This conviction crystallizes in provision for what is known as field work—courses in which the work which the student is doing in church or settlement is regarded as a kind of laboratory and made the basis of systematic discussion by the class or a selected group. In a few institutions the seminary assumes full responsibility for student assignment to such work and gives academic credit for the work done. In others the arrangement is more informal. But the principle is very generally recognized and has large implications for the future.

A very real difficulty grows out of the fact that in a large number of institutions students who are college graduates are found studying side by side with others who have had only two years of college work or less. The difficulty is accentuated by the fact that as a result of the elective system the B.A. degree has largely lost its definite educational significance and seminary teachers can count on no uniform preparation on the part of the students they teach. One of the crying needs of the present situation is some agreement by the leading seminaries as to a course of study for men preparing to enter the seminary which could be recommended to the colleges with the same authority as that which accompanies similar recommen-

dations as to preclinical work in medicine. Such a course should include basic subjects like history, philosophy, literature, and elementary science, and should point out in detail the general content of the courses to be recommended.

A significant feature of the report is the evidence that it brings of the growing appreciation by the representatives of the seminary faculties of the need of maintaining a warm religious life on the part of students and faculty. Surprising as it may seem, this has not always been the case. This is not due to the fact that the importance of vital piety has not been recognized, but that the difficulty of achieving it has not been sufficiently appreciated. It has been assumed that those who come to the seminaries are already well grounded in the Christian life and that they need little help from the seminary apart from that furnished by the formal chapel service. Yet there is no subject on which there is greater agreement among students than that among the influences they have found helpful in the cultivation of the religious life, the seminary chapel holds the lowest place. On the other hand, there is general agreement that among these helps the practice of personal devotion stands first. Here is a contrast which suggests food for thought, and it is an encouraging fact that those responsible for seminary leadership are giving it their most earnest attention.

When one passes from the matter of standards and courses to personnel problems, one finds much that is worthy of earnest consideration. Much information is given showing the sources from which the present ministry is being recruited, the homes from which our seminary students come, and the character of their preliminary training. Much information is also furnished as to the personnel and training of the present teaching staff.

One fact that stands out clearly among the findings of the study is that the chief recruiting source for the seminary is the small denominational college. So far as the available evidence is concerned, the men who come from these colleges do not make a worse academic showing than those who come from larger institutions, and they give every evidence of sincere Christian purpose and warm devotional life. But it is clear that they bring to the seminary a narrow cultural background as well as limited financial resources and that present conditions in the seminaries do little to better this state of affairs.

Two further facts concerning the student body are interesting: One

the fact that for financial and other reasons seminary students have had their educational preparation interrupted for longer periods than men entering upon other professions; the other the fact that while in the seminary they are obliged to give a large part of their time to work of a remunerative character. This is unfortunate in two ways. It reduces the time available for the required work of the seminary and it prevents the use of the time that remains in the most profitable way. Many different proposals have been made for dealing with this difficulty, but no adequate solution has as yet been found.

So far as the faculty is concerned we find a larger proportion of older men than would be found in other comparable professional schools and a surprisingly large number whose previous training has been in the pastorate. While seminary teachers have their fair proportion of earned degrees, a larger proportion of these come from denominational institutions than is true of the members of other professional schools.

In view of the serious criticisms which are often leveled against the output of the theological seminary, every effort was made to decide how far the graduates of these schools were succeeding in comparison with those ministers who had not had the advantage of combined college and seminary training. Judged by every test which the wit of Professor May could devise, the college and seminary trained graduate shows himself more successful than his colleagues who have not enjoyed such training. As between men who have had college training but no seminary training and *vice versa*, it was impossible to detect any significant variation; and the same was true as between graduates of liberal and of conservative schools.

So far I have been considering the more encouraging features of the study. There are, however, discouraging features to be set over against them. One of these is the existence of a large number of small schools of limited equipment and insufficient teaching facilities, which are turning out ill-equipped ministers, and so making the maintenance of proper standards by the larger and better-equipped schools more difficult. This difficulty would not of itself prove insuperable if the larger schools were effectively co-operating in the maintenance of standards. Up to the present time unfortunately this has not been the case. Within the general lines laid down by the governing board, each school has been to a large extent a law unto itself, and in not a few schools this is true also of the different departments

and even of individual professors. There is little hope of any material progress in raising the level of the ministry as a whole until co-operative planning becomes the rule rather than the exception. An important step in this direction was taken by the action of the Conference of Theological Seminaries in adopting the report of its Curriculum Committee on the standardization of theological degrees:

The report recommends that in view of its predominant use "the B.D. degree be adopted as the standard first degree for a theological course. It will normally require three years of two semesters, or their equivalent, beyond the A.B., or its equivalent, to complete this course. It should be regarded as a professional degree, the standards of which in intellectual attainment are fully equal to those in any other field of scholarly activity."

The report further recommends that

"a diploma be awarded for work during a theological course of three years, which does not meet the full requirements for the bachelor's degree in theology. We recommend that the diploma be *not* awarded for work which has satisfied the degree requirements in quantity, but has not satisfied those requirements as to quality."

In addition the report recommends that

"a master's degree in theology be adopted as the standard second degree in recognition of work which would normally extend one year beyond the bachelor's degree in theology."

and that

"where a theological seminary without university affiliation grants a doctor's degree, the Th.D. be the degree used." While the Conference regards it "as undesirable for a seminary not an integral part of the university to grant the Ph.D. or the A.M. degrees, it considers it legitimate for a seminary affiliated with a university to offer a program leading to the Ph.D. and A.M. degrees in co-operation with a university, the degree being given by the university."¹

So far as the equipment of the seminaries is concerned, the impression produced by the study is on the whole favorable. Both in material equipment and in the matter of financial support the seminaries are on the whole as well off as corresponding institutions of similar size in other professions. There is, however, one conspicuous exception. A careful study of available library facilities shows that with the exception of a few of the larger and better-equipped institutions, the libraries of the great majority of seminaries are small and ill-furnished with the latest books and that no

¹ Vol. I, p. 143.

proper provision has been made for their administration according to the standards which obtain in corresponding institutions in other fields.

This suggests a more serious weakness of our present seminary organization—that the seminaries are not so manned as to make possible their fair contribution to research in the field of applied religion.

There is no more characteristic feature of our contemporary academic life than the generous provision which is made for research. The sums spent for this purpose in our larger universities run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. Special positions exist, to which scholars of distinction can be assigned, who are relieved of all teaching duties and furnished with whatever equipment is necessary for the efficient prosecution of their research. No corresponding provision has been made by our seminaries for setting apart selected individuals for research in the field of applied religion. A few institutions, to be sure, provide for a sabbatical year, or half year, and in less formal ways opportunity has been given to not a few professors to study abroad. But there are few seminaries so organized as to make it possible for one of their staff to devote his entire time to research.

Yet here, if anywhere, such provision is needed. Nowhere have such radical readjustments taken place as in the field of applied religion. Nowhere is accurate knowledge more needed as a basis for the work that needs to be done in such fields as Christian sociology, the psychology of religion, Christian missions, and religious education. Yet there are few individuals who are giving themselves to work of this kind and few positions which make it possible for them to do so.

"This lack of provision for research on the part of the seminaries," the report states, "is the more surprising in view of the fact that in the churches the need for co-operative research in the field of contemporary religion is being more and more generally recognized. The Federal Council of Churches has for years maintained a Department of Education and Research, which commands the service of several full-time people. The need of making provision for research in the fields of their primary interests has been felt both by the International Missionary Council and by the International Council of Religious Education. The Universal Council on Life and Work (the body which carries on the movement initiated at Stockholm in 1925) has found it necessary to appoint two full-time men to undertake co-operative research on its behalf." The Report of the Lindsay

Commission on Higher Education in India, of the International Missionary Council on Modern Industry and the African, and more recently the comprehensive report of the Laymen's Committee on *Rethinking Missions*, as well as a number of important studies by the Institute of Social and Religious Research,² are but the most conspicuous examples of what can be done in this field if the will and the means are available.

But why should it be left to outside bodies to undertake such co-operative research? Why is it not the primary responsibility of the seminaries themselves? They are the institutions which are responsible for training the teachers of the church. They, more than any one else, need the information which can only be secured by such co-operative research. To secure this information and to make it available for the teachers in the less favorably situated institutions would seem to be a primary responsibility of the stronger seminaries. What is needed is not simply that individuals should be set free for longer or shorter terms to pursue research in the fields for which their interest and previous training have peculiarly fitted them, but that the entire field should be canvassed with a view to determining where are the greatest gaps in our knowledge and at what points a co-operative study undertaken by competent people would promise the most rewarding results. For this there must be some central body which can serve as a clearinghouse of information and which when agreement has been reached can secure the co-operation of the scholars whose assistance is essential.

IV. A PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE

Co-operation, then, is essential if the situation which the study reveals is to be dealt with with the thoroughness which it deserves—co-operation all along the line. Co-operation between the different seminaries that they may face their work effectively and supplement each other at the point of greatest need. Co-operation between the seminary and the college and the university in working out lines of effective pre-seminary preparation. Above all, co-operation between the seminaries and the church in maintaining proper ministerial standards, in providing for a nationwide system of adult education, and in creating the public opinion which will support the needed reforms.

² E.g., *The International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations* (New York, 1932), and the recent *Survey of Church Union in Canada* (New York, 1933).

We cannot better sum up the program to which the study points than by quoting the final paragraphs with which the study concludes:

1. In any comprehensive program of ministerial education it is important to distinguish between the training needed by the parish minister and the provision which is required for meeting the specialized needs and problems of particular groups. The former is the responsibility of all the seminaries; the latter of a limited number of institutions. For the effective discharge of both tasks co-operation is essential.

2. Co-operation is needed in the first field—the education of the parish minister

- (a) for determining the requirements of the primary theological degree;
- (b) for establishing a standard for the pre-professional training of candidates for the ministry;
- (c) for determining the consensus and dissensus in the newer fields of study, such as psychology, education, the social sciences and comparative religion, where the materials for effective teaching are not available in seminaries whose library facilities are defective, and where the mass of fugitive material can be mastered, and put into shape for general use only through co-operative study.

3. Co-operation is needed in the second field—the training of individuals or groups with special needs

- (a) for apportioning responsibility as between seminaries for performing special tasks requiring technical training not possible to the ordinary seminary teacher;
- (b) for providing adequately for the training (1) in special institutions, (2) through post-graduate courses, or (3) by conference and counsel on the field, of those persons who are charged with special administrative responsibility for the missionary and educational work of the church at home and abroad;
- (c) for providing for the adequate training of teachers of religion, both in the college field and for the seminary;
- (d) for standardizing the higher theological degrees, and finally,
- (e) for releasing a sufficient number of qualified persons from seminary faculties for co-operative research in the field of religion.

4. Co-operation between the college and the seminary is needed

- (a) for providing the necessary pre-professional training for prospective students for the ministry;
- (b) for interpreting the opportunities offered by the ministry to students who come to college undecided as to their future work;
- (c) for interpreting to the great body of students the place of religion in life; and finally, in the case of the university,
- (d) for providing adequate facilities for research in the field of religion and appropriate academic recognition for good work done in that field.

5. Co-operation between the church and the seminary is needed
 - (a) for defining and maintaining ministerial standards;
 - (b) for the development of an adequate system of continued ministerial education;
 - (c) for educating lay opinion on the need of a unified system of ministerial education and of such changes in present conditions in the church as will make it possible.

6. In order to facilitate such co-operation both of the seminaries with one another, and of the seminaries with the colleges and the church, there should be organized as soon as possible within the present Conference of Theological Seminaries a Council of Ministerial Education, or other similar agency, which can represent the seminaries in helping to bring about the results thus outlined. Such a Council should conceive its task not narrowly, but as a contribution to the solution of the larger problems with which, as we have seen, the church and the nation are confronted—the problem of securing a united church, an effective Protestantism, and an educational system which gives adequate recognition to the central importance of religion for human life.

Christian Experience in a Science-Dominated World

A. STEWART WOODBURN

WE often hear the remark that the world to-day is dominated by science. That suggests the query, Has science any competitor for the domination of the world? The answer must be given in the light of history. In the age of primitive culture the minds of people were pretty much under the control of magical attitudes. The world was not understood as subject to regular laws. The hypothesis of the uniformity of nature had not been formulated. Primitive folks believe that anything may happen, and that indeed anything may be made to happen, if one be in possession of the occult means for bringing the thing desired to pass. The magical attitude is pre-scientific, and still persists even among people of well-developed culture, especially in connection with certain religious beliefs and practices. It may persist alongside of religion, but it cannot live for long in a scientific atmosphere. The more we ascertain in regard to the laws of nature, and the more we act in conformity with that knowledge, the less chance is there for magical notions to survive. The doctrine of transubstantiation may persist only by permitting a survival of the magical attitude in the mass.

The progress of the sciences in the Middle Ages was retarded because of the exercise of ecclesiastical control over all the affairs of life and thought. Science was the product of reason which stood in contrast to revelation. Reason could disclose to man a certain amount of truth, but the higher truths were given by revelation. If any conflict appeared, it was always settled on the basis of the superiority of source. The deductive scheme of Aristotelian logic was used by the church to give intellectual respectability to its authoritarian claims. All branches of knowledge, philosophy and science as well as religion and theology were controlled by the church. Any attempt to gain freedom from this control was promptly met with coercive treatment. In the thirteenth century Roger Bacon made contributions to several sciences, and also began to use the inductive method, but for his pains he was rewarded with two ten-year periods of imprison-

ment. The reception accorded to Copernicus, Bruno and Galileo for their scientific innovations is familiar history.

When Francis Bacon formulated the inductive method in logic, he was devising the instrument which made modern science possible. The procedure through observation and experiment, to which was added later the use of the hypothesis, and the trial-and-error method of testing, administered a death-dealing blow to authoritarianism. Scientists still use the deductive method, but only after they have established a conclusion with sufficient certainty to use it as a major premise. They reject any *a priori* doctrines, whether furnished by philosophy or theology. They demand complete freedom of investigation, and regard no conclusion as sacrosanct, being always ready to make revisions as subsequent investigation necessitates adjustment. This type of competition is the most subtle for science, for it may appear even in the guise of science. The work of more than one scientist has had to be discounted because he permitted his theories to bias his observations. The more completely the scientific attitude is dominant, the more recessive become all types of a priorism and external authoritarianism.

The most distinctive feature of modern science is its method of procedure. It is the derivation of general laws through observation, as far as feasible under controlled conditions. It proceeds inductively from particulars to general conclusions involving relations and generic characters. It makes use, wherever possible, of the tools of exact measurement and calculation, and strives to attain all possible precision. Its fundamental thesis is the uniformity of nature, but the aspects of nature with which it deals are almost exclusively the quantitative. Its method is also selective, one problem at a time being made the focus of attention. In the treatment of many of its problems, it works through symbols toward its solutions, always being ready to discard a set of symbols that prove to be ineffective, and to devise new ones for its purpose. Nothing must be allowed to jeopardize its freedom.

Professor J. Arthur Thomson has defined science as "systematized, verifiable and communicable knowledge, reached by reflection on the impersonal data of observation and experiment, registration and measurement" (*Science and Religion*, p. 34). Everyone knows that the sciences vary in their ability to apply methods of precision. The physical sciences have a distinct advantage over the biological and social sciences in this

respect. Nevertheless the biological and social sciences bring to light knowledge that may be quite as valuable as that obtained by physical measurements, which opens the door of possibility that there may be knowledge not strictly scientific at all. Thomson makes a needed distinction between the informational data which become the raw material of science and that formulated and systematized knowledge which has a right to be designated as science. A scientist is more than a mere collector of information. To deserve that title, a man must also have the capacity to analyze, classify and arrange his data so as to show their relations. He must be able to present his findings in such a way that they can be checked and verified by other students of his subject. The neglect of this fundamental aspect of science has resulted rather tragically in some of our educational institutions in too much stress on a multiplicity of facts, not understood in their relations, and consequently easily forgotten. No one can lay claim to a scientific education or to a scientific outlook who does not seriously endeavor to discover the relations between facts.

The word science (Latin *scientia* from the verb *scire*, to know or to learn) has such definite relations to knowledge that many people regard it as equivalent to knowledge. One of the results has been to put any religious claim to knowledge in a somewhat embarrassing position. It is at this point that the impingement of science on religion has been experienced most seriously. Christian people have always regarded their religious experiences as a pathway to truth. They have indeed laid claim to this pathway as leading to truths of superior worth than those obtainable through scientific methods. The crux of the problem in regard to Christian experiences in a science-dominated world concerns this claim to truth. Must we abdicate that claim because science has a superior right? The question is one which involves the method or methods of obtaining knowledge. Is the scientific method the only way of experiencing knowledge? Is it the sole pathway to truth? If that were the case, then we would require to devise some way of employing scientific method to induce Christian experience. It is not easy to see how observation, experiment, registration and measurement could be used in the business of knowing God.

The progress of scientific knowledge has gone far to dissipate dogmatism in every sphere of thought. The results of investigations and research have necessitated frequent modifications and adjustments of positions previously held. The scientists have little difficulty in doing that in

their own fields. They have led the way, and thoughtful philosophers and theologians have been increasingly realizing the value of that attitude. It is just as dangerous in the sphere of religion as in science to conclude that one has arrived at finality in regard to a belief. At the same time, scientists are recognizing more and more that they would be running counter to the attitudes and methods they recognize within their own spheres if they were to be dogmatic in regard to religious experience. They are morally obligated to recognize the validity of our claims to Christian experience. Some eminent scientists have no difficulty in granting that recognition, for they testify that they have such experiences themselves, and find no incongruity between the two types of experience. Religious experience is psychological, and if through such an experience one finds meaning and worth that to him is as real as the meanings and values experienced in association with other psychological experiences, it would be rank dogmatism for a scientist to deny their possibility.

The processes of knowing are psychologically the same, whether we are concerned with Christian experience or scientific experience. The processes of sense-perceiving, of concept-forming, of judging, of educing relations and of educing meanings are carried on after the same fashion, whichever be the realm of experience in which we are moving. Furthermore the processes of our thinking are subject to the same tests of validity in both areas. Religious concepts have no superior rights of immunity from the tests of logic that scientific concepts do not enjoy. We may be doing an actual disservice to the cause of religion if we try to exempt our Christian beliefs from logical scrutiny. We do better to think of the distinction as within the sphere of the meanings we employ. By virtue of the method employed by the scientists, the meanings that he educes are metrical and mechanical. The relations with which he is concerned are quantitative and impersonal. The data that he manipulates are material or symbolic. On the other hand, by virtue of the nature of religious experience, the meanings educes are personal and social, because the relations involved are between persons, or between a person and an object that is personified. And the data that are used are vital or that which symbolizes the vital.

There should not be opposition to the recognition of each type of meaning as valid within its own area, for each type of relation is experienced. We measure all sorts of things. We even carry the technique of measurement into the anthropological sciences. But we also have busi-

ness with other people that results in appreciation of qualities of character outside the range of our devices of calculation. All the possible measurements of one's mother combined and arranged with scientific accuracy would be utterly inadequate to convey the meaning of motherhood, a meaning only obtained by living together in the give-and-take of family life. The analogy is not too far-fetched to say that the metrical calculations that scientists have achieved of the environing universe do not exhaust its meanings. The Christian who prays, worships and reaches out for spiritual re-enforcement is in the way of discovering truth not available by the use of scientific means.

That does not mean that in our Christian experience we can ignore scientific meanings or the scientific method. If this be a rational universe, then religious meanings and scientific meanings cannot be inconsistent with each other. They may be supplementary, but not contradictory. There ought to be coherence in our conclusions, or something is wrong somewhere. Christian experience need not be such that the scientist can give a thorough explanation of it. Or, again it may be something of which he can give a satisfactory account. But, as has been noted, his technique limits him. There are phases of truth that escape his measuring instruments and tables of calculation. Students of the psychology of adolescence can give a fairly satisfactory account of the conversion experience. The mystic's experience in which he claims to lose his sense of personal identity in God is not so easily explained. Scientific explanation is a matter of degree. It is at its maximum in physical science, and its minimum in religious experience. But in any case, we do not expect that our experience of God or freedom will be such as to demand our setting aside what has been demonstrated in the scientific sphere. The modern apologist for miracle is under the necessity of redefining it as a specifically religious experience in the interests of making religious and scientific truths cohere. The idea that there can be breaches in the laws of nature is inadmissible, though everyone admits that we have not discovered all the laws, and phenomena may occur which are beyond our present ability to explain.

The scientific habit of mind is enabling us to be more specific in the meanings that we employ. We must be as explicit as possible, and discover wherein Christian experience is distinctive. Many attempts have been made to reduce it to a particular kind of sentiment or emotion, others to define it with reference to a content of belief, and still others to identify

it with typical activities. There is undoubtedly some truth in all such descriptions, yet none of them tells the whole truth. When may we describe an experience as Christian? An experience is Christian when it is motivated by that kind of devotion to the highest and best that marked the way that Jesus lived. An experience is Christian in which one is aware of being in contact with the deepest, most abiding, and most real aspects of the universe. Christian experience is the type of experience into which one is initiated in entering upon Jesus' way of living. It is the testimony of many great souls that through prayer, worship, and meditation they have experienced such an awareness. There is no reason for confining our definition in an experience totally apart from the other aspects of life. Jesus suggested that giving a cup of water in the right spirit might be an enriching experience. An experience is uniquely Christian when there is a consciousness of worth more than is explicable by the immediate experience, and that sense of value may be associated with any kind of activity that is motivated by the love and devotion that we find in Jesus. If a person's life is dominated by the spirit of Jesus, all experience is, in so far forth, Christian experience.

The scientific emphasis on truth and accuracy is one which Christian thinkers do well to share with the scientist. As contrasted with the metrical methods of much science, our personal attitudes in religion have a larger degree of emotional emphasis. The greater the degree of feeling tone in an experience, the more difficult it is to describe it with calculating precision. Naturally a feeling of reverence does not lend itself to the accuracy of description that the purchase of a yard of cloth does. Nevertheless there is room for a much greater effort to conform strictly to the factual than has often been the case. We should not allow our imaginations to run riot with us, as is so easily the case in describing a religious experience in which the emotional elements are dominant. Thoughtful people who have not had such experiences are likely to question the validity of all religious claims, if they encounter exaggeration of this type. The Christian conception of God is a synthesis of all that is of greatest value, and truth is integral to the conception. We cast doubt on the extent of our knowledge of him when we allow ourselves to deal in colorful inaccuracies. The scientific emphasis on truth at all cost is most wholesome, and should be a contribution to religious thought and life.

The scientific outlook on life and the world has made us aware that

there have been a great many occasions when we have indulged in glittering generalities where concrete evidence would have been more truthful and more worthful. We have used abstractions aplenty in our conversations about Christian experience, and that has relieved us of a great deal of attention to the details. As practical Christian people, we shall do well to take a leaf from the notebook of the scientist, and attend more closely to particulars. It is easier to generalize about sin and salvation than it is to be specific. But it is more in keeping with the ethics of Jesus to deal with particular evils from which we need particular deliverances. It is far less disturbing to make a subscription toward a missionary movement that is attempting to restore normal childhood to Chinese and Indian children than it is to get squarely behind legislation to prevent child labor in these United States. It is much easier to pray for the forgiveness of debts in the abstract than it is to practice the principle of forgiveness up to "seventy times seven." If we could carry the scientific tendency to be specific into Christian experience, the result would be revolutionary. For Christian experience means vastly more than having a Christian spirit about nothing in particular.

Scientific study is making it evident that many of the ills from which mankind suffers, many of the hindrances to the Christian life are preventable. Happily also, the scientists are extending our techniques of control, so that we can eliminate some of these ills and enrich the possibilities for Christian living. Disease, lack of sanitation, bad housing, excessive hours of labor, and insufficient nourishing food are some of the preventable evils to which Christian people are directing more and more attention and intelligence. They are among the evils that sap the physical and moral energies, and make it impossible to live and be at our best. While we pray for deliverance from evil, we have it within our own power to accomplish deliverance in a number of directions. Such sciences as sanitation, preventive medicine, and political science may become means through which we can accomplish the answers to our own prayers. That does not mean that we can forthwith dispense with God. There are other evils that are personal and moral, to overcome which we need to be able to call on all the available spiritual resources, while of course we co-operate with them. We are intended, indeed, to "work out our own salvation," and in that never completed task we experience the consciousness that it is "God that worketh in us."

John Dewey described experience as *experiencing*. We may say the same of Christian experience. It is an unfinished process, and so it is necessarily forward-looking. It is experience that is always related to the ideal which for us was personified in Jesus. That means by definition an element of incompleteness, and of hope for a future better than past or present. There is no possibility of the Christian ideal ever becoming static, for there is always something yet to be learned about the application of Jesus' way of life to the ever-changing conditions of personal and social experience. The claim that the revelation of God in Jesus was complete is an academic claim, and assumes that the significance of Jesus' way of living is perfectly understood. As long as Christian people fail so lamentably in securing the acceptance of the standard that was embodied in the Galilean, there will be plenty of room for experiences of revelation in the future. Revelation and discovery are like the obverse and reverse sides of a coin. So long as discovery is incomplete, the claim of a complete revelation is rather presumptuous.

The intrusion of the scientific point of view into our thinking has altered the way in which we think of what constitutes an authority. The conception prevalent in theological circles for centuries was dominantly juridical. It had reference to the recognition of some standard of belief and practice, and the enforcement of such a standard. The authorities of church, scripture and of rational principles are all familiar types, and each of them is regarded as independent of human experience, having God as its source. In the scientific realm we are becoming familiar, on the other hand, with recognizing the right of the expert. He who because of extended observations and experiments has the mastery over a particular area of study is accepted as an authority. We can build on the foundations laid by such a man, without danger of confusion. A scientist never pretends to speak with authority outside the realm of his own researches, unless it be to express his familiarity with other scholarly authorities. This conception is significant as we think of religious experience. A man whose life has been enhanced by enriching Christian experience may speak to us with the authority of the expert. When we live at our best, when we are most aggressive in our earnestness to make Jesus' way our way, we are most certain that he speaks to us authoritatively. It is the authority of persuasion, not of coercion; the authority of participation, not of criticism. The authority of Jesus over our religious life consists in the superlative way he

lived, and the certainty in regard to God that he instills in those who follow him.

We are interested particularly in how the future of Christian experience is to be related to future scientific advance. That criterion which Jesus enunciated in regard to an old established institution—the sabbath—may well be our guide in the present discussion. Science is made for man. We may add that science is also made by man. It is a human instrument with possibilities of contributing to life's enrichment in many directions. Of course it may be turned to destructive ends also. That is what constitutes the challenge to people with Christian idealism. The enrichment of life is the end and aim of Christian experience. What could be more important than the control of an instrument with such possibilities in both directions? We can help save people, or we can add to their peril, according to the way we use our scientific techniques. As far as the use or abuse we make of our growing body of knowledge, man is the master of his own fate. Unfortunately there are many people who have no concern that Christian idealism should have any bearing on scientific control, and that makes our task the more difficult. There is enough power available through such knowledge to destroy our civilization. Christian experience must help save the world from that peril. By harnessing the energies released by the sciences to the tasks of delivering humanity from the evils that threaten and imperil, and of enriching life in every area, we may make this science-dominated world fit to be a kingdom of God. We may use the tools of science to lead the world to an understanding of our Christian faith that the greatest thing in the world is love.

Two Views of Religious Education

I. By What Authority?

S. A. COURTIS

MANY years ago, a young peasant from the hill country of Judea traveled with his disciples from village to village preaching the gospel of a new day. The times were ripe for a new deal. The oppressive materialism and greed of Rome were equalled in their disheartening influence upon the minds and spirits of men only by the formalism and lack of spirituality on the part of those charged with the duty of keeping vision active, and hope dynamic, in the souls of men. Consequently, the common people heard the new prophet gladly. They said, "Never man spake like this man." For he taught them as one that had *authority*, and not as the scribes.

The chief priests and elders of the people were naturally much disturbed by the radicalism and growing influence of the young preacher. And it came to pass that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, and spake unto him saying, "Tell us, *by what authority* doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?"¹

Nineteen hundred years have rolled by since that question was propounded, and once again in the endless cycles of human history civilization finds itself in the confusion that necessarily precedes the dawn of a new era. Once again there is great searching for hidden causes, as men seek to discover the best way out. Once again the deserted temples, the formalism of church life, the worldly-mindedness of religious leaders are indicative of the impotence and failure of conventional religion. Once again the searching question, "By whose authority?" is on the tongues of men. This time, however, it is the insurgent element that speaks. The questioners of Jesus' day were the chief priests and elders of the people. In 1934, the tables are turned; it is youth who is doing the questioning. Intelligent

¹ Saint Luke 20. 1 and 2.

young men and women—college students and industrial workers alike—anxiously searching for interpretation of, and guidance through, life's mysteries and perplexities, listen to what formal religion has to offer and turn away, uncomprehending and untouched. The authority on which the church rests its cause *does not satisfy* the questionings of the modern man.

To one who has occasion to deal with the young men and women of this modern world, and who has *himself* found inspiration and direction in the words and life of Jesus, the inability of religionists to minister to the pressing needs of the rising generation is only a little less astounding than their apparent unconcern over the dwindling influence of religion in the affairs of men. Philosophy, Science, Philanthropy, and Education are rapidly taking over, one after another, each vital function which religion has exercised in the past. Only forms and traditions remain. The power to set human beings on fire with zeal to achieve a better order of social living has gone out of very many of the churches of Him whose mission is described in the affirmation, "I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly."

To the casual observer, to the materialist, or to the superficial thinker, these facts mean that religion is only "organized superstition," or, in the language of the youth of the day, "the bunk." The passing of the religious influence is hailed by many as a sign of progress. But to those who have experienced the transforming, creative power of spiritual forces, so simple an explanation will not do. In spite of the regeneration which has taken place in the world since the time of Jesus, the vision of that greatest of all the prophets of Israel has not yet been completely, or even nearly, achieved. Men *still* need the inspiration of great ideals in their search for better values by which to live. Men are *still* born self-centered, and must be "born again" before they are competent to play their part in the coming era of "social control," the modern name for those age-old concepts, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Kingdom of Heaven.

To many persons both in and out of the churches, the chief cause of the decline in the influence of religion has been the rise of science. In the old days, human life was a thing of mystery. Anything might happen, and what was observed to happen was just as inexplicable as what men thought was happening. Science, however, introduced a new source of authority. When a scientist proclaimed that hydrogen and oxygen combine to form water, he did so, not on the basis of a unique personal revelation from the

creator who, it was reasonable to suppose, actually knew the real composition of water, nor on the basis of logic (for who could determine by reason that a liquid would result from the combination of two colorless gases?), but on the basis of an *impeachable* authority. Science admits as facts only experiences which are demonstrable and can be shared. The chemist checks his thinking by submitting his predictions to the test of experience. Truth is that which works. No chemist seeks to control other chemists except by the power *inherent* in truth. He knows he must supply evidence for the truth he proclaims, evidence which is so capable of verification that it may be called objective and impersonal. Furthermore, scientific truth is accepted *only* as a tentative working approximation to ultimate reality. True science is self-corrective. A single unexplained experience wrecks a theory, no matter how long or how carefully it may have been established. Scientists are those, and those only, who *acknowledge an authority above and beyond their own little lives and minds*. Rapidly in our day the influence of the scientific spirit is making itself felt in every walk of life.² From the authority of science, there is no appeal except to more scientific science.

When a young person trained in modern laboratories and practiced in thinking scientifically attends even a "liberal" church, what does he hear that is acceptable in terms of his own patterns of thought? "Thus saith the Lord" represents a type of autocratic, personal authority which he has been trained to avoid. No one submits willingly to domination and direction by others unless he is conscious of his own immaturity. Man to-day no longer feels himself to be an immature being, dependent upon a Heavenly Father for paternal care and direction. He knows himself as a personality of achieved intelligence and power, and is conscious that in himself are vast unrealized potentialities of growth. The form of statement suited to the days of his infancy repels *adolescent* man. It does nothing to satisfy his desire to understand. Direction and guidance he knows himself to need, but not the direction of a tyrant or dictator. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God," would be a much more acceptable form of statement were it not tied up with the perplexing symbol, "God," to which he has already reacted adversely. Besides, the church does not present the beatitudes as research experiments to be tested by the

² This statement is not meant to imply that most men are consciously and voluntarily scientific in their methods of searching for truth. The mass of humanity is still inadequately prepared to carry forward the scientific discovery of truth. But the machine age operates to make individuals *objectively-minded* in their thinking in certain fields and creates an attitude which demands evidence for statements made.

individual to see whether or not they work. Rather they are presented as statements of absolute truth formulated by a unique personality, second only to God in supernatural power—truths, perfect and unalterable, once and forever delivered to the saints; not subject to reinterpretation based upon experience and growth. To many a modern mind, there seems to be nothing left for the individual to do but to accept or to reject such statements; and in such situations he has been trained to consider either acceptance or rejection as profitless and undesirable. Further, the church presents a picture of God as a heavenly father who watches over and protects his children; but the holdup man on the next corner or a nation-wide depression prove effectively, by the only *standards he has learned to respect*, that the picture is not true in the childish form in which it is arrayed. Youth is promised that whatever he asks in prayer in Jesus' name will be granted, but the very minister who transmits the promise appeals for funds in a very human way instead of praying for them directly. The more modern youth studies religion, the more puzzling situations multiply. He soon gives up religion as hopeless, and consigns the church and all churchgoers to his favorite category, inclusive of all he regards as beyond the bounds of reasonable understanding, "nuts."

The sorrow of it is that there are others ready to take advantage of his dilemma and to steer him into ways which pay immediate dividends of seeming value. Pleasure, greed, lust are bound by no traditions or forms. They keep up to date; yes, they even dictate the prevailing mode. Who *first* adopted cosmetics, or abbreviated clothing? Not the refined, the virtuous, the farseeing ladies of the land, but the courtesans, the ladies on the borderline of respectability, the primitives in our social order, and the social climbers. So it has come about that to-day when the ship of state drifts rudderless, repairs are being made and its future course charted, not by prophets, priests, or even philosophers, but by financiers, engineers, sociologists, and a host of others whose vision is no wider than the immediate affairs of men. Technocracy and Bolshevist Russia have this in common—neither provides a place for representatives of God and the spiritual life in their council chambers. *By what authority* will standards of value for the new day be set?

In view of the changes science has brought about in the methods of thinking of men, one might suppose that the advance agents of the new day might look to their great philosophers for guidance and direction. But

scientific philosophy is too young to have outgrown its swaddling clothes. For instance, read the manifesto issued by a group of humanists whose standing is evidenced by the name of John Dewey among them. It says: "First; Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created. . . . Sixth; We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of 'new thought.' . . . Tenth; It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with *belief in the supernatural*."

In other words, the only way the potential leaders of men know to go about the task of setting up new standards, is to *dogmatically and arbitrarily* say what is, and what is not, true. In one affirmation they proclaim man as a part of nature and state that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process; in another they deny all possibility of there being in the self-existing and non-created universe any higher order of nature than that they know. They state that "Religious humanism considers the *complete realization of human personality* to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the *here and now*," but they also postulate an impersonal self-existing, self-improving, materialistic universe, unrelated to personality. Such blind leaders are well described in the verse that follows:³

Blindness

So close we walk to life, the sudden air
 Half bends beneath its weight of prisoned power
 Yet, like some silly king, we proudly wear
 The heavy robe and crown, and, chilly, cower
 Beneath the laden storms that seek to tear
 Aside our trappings for one little hour,
 Sweeping life through our frozen, sluggish veins,
 And lifting our bowed head to light again;
 Till, dimly roused, we wonder childishly . . .
 Or wisely postulate . . . yet never see
 That all the sky swings low and opens wide,
 As if some unseen watcher held his breath
 To see life press so closely at our side,
 While we walk blindly on and talk with Death.

The theme of this paper is that men should combine the vision and faith of the Man of Galilee with the methods and zeal of the humanists.

³ An unpublished poem by Emma Jacobs, now Mrs. W. G. Bergman of Detroit, Mich.

The manifesto issued by the humanists describes perfectly the road to truth when it insists that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry, and by the assessment of their relations to human needs. When religion formulates its hopes and plans in terms of the scientific spirit and method it will achieve its rightful place in the affairs of men.

The humanists, however, seem to the writer to commit the very faults they condemn in religion. They dogmatically shut the door upon faith and vision, and insist that man's known nature and needs shall be the only criteria by which all human values are to be judged. Is a tadpole competent to judge the value of developing legs and lungs? Can an unborn babe eliminate by fiat of will born of his limited experiences, the mother who carries him? No; the manifesto goes too far.

Religion still has need of that *higher order of the natural* to which men have given the name "supernatural." But religion in common with the other activities of men must build her developing truths and interpretations upon scientific experimentation and generalization, before she can hope to win the loyalty of intelligent youth. There are forces and values which transcend the limits of the life known to the physical senses, and no explanation which does not recognize these elements will satisfy. The source of man's power is not in his known elements but in his (so far) unobjectified potentialities and relationships. These are apprehended by faith and intuition, not by science, although they are made manifest by measurable action. As such they are amenable to scientific investigation and study, even though in their essential nature they transcend that study.

To speak of the *scientific* investigation of *religious* experiences is to awaken in many minds connotations as far apart as the poles. "Can God be brought into the laboratory," such persons ask, "or can His Grace be subjected to experimental control?" We are all so habituated to thinking of religion in theological terms that we tend to forget there is a human aspect to religious phenomena.⁴ However much religion may issue from God in Heaven, spiritual forces are made manifest only through the modifications they produce in human behavior. It is true that finite man ought not to hope to control the infinite Creator, but there is no reason why he

⁴ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me *because* he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Saint Luke 4: 18, 19.

should not control himself. How are new aspirations kindled in the souls of men? How does human perception of higher values take place? What transforming power do vision, faith and loyalty have upon the sons of men and how may such influences be measured? What conditions are favorable for the maintenance and development of spiritual life? How may one best co-operate with his neighbor in the overcoming of evil, and in the releasing of latent spiritual powers? These and hundreds of problems like them have to do with aspects of religious experience for which scientific methods are appropriate pathways to knowledge and understanding. Hundreds of persons can testify to the realities of religious experiences, but the conventional interpretation of those experiences is couched in terms which have no basis of objective definition. God, soul, spirit, saving grace, life beyond the grave are all language symbols for certain elements of human experiences which make for direction, progress, growth. Man must remain an adolescent until his scientific knowledge yields control over the direction of his evolution. The Spirit of Truth has been given to man to lead him into *all* truth. The basic question is, not "Shall such researches be carried on?" but "What institution is best fitted to assume the function of investigation of spiritual phenomena?" The church's other functions of spiritual regeneration, nurture, and worship fit her peculiarly to be the agency best adapted to serve as the inspirer, organizer and integrator of scientific truth about the human aspects of religious experiences.

To-day, youth feels more keenly than for many years the stirring of forces above and beyond itself. Churches and manifestoes, if they are to live, must give expression to these desires and drives, and must recognize the sources from which they come. To-day in every field the imagery, the language, and the logic of the past are inadequate to express the larger truths which are even now in process of emerging in human consciousness. There is need for science and religion to join hands in an openminded, humble search for light upon the problem of that larger personality, long known as God, which man may yet become. In time churches will function as centers for creative religious research. Then they will not proclaim (except as hypothetical guides to experimentation) truths they cannot prove. There will always be a place for intuitive revelation, but only as unique experiences which give rise to vision and faith. The youth of the land, as well as the Kingdom of Heaven, await the coming of the church of scientific religion.

II. Modern Youth and Religion

SIDNEY CASE McCAMMON

IF one desires to know how the dove felt on his first trip out from the Ark, let him try to order his thinking concerning modern youth and religion. The vast expanse of the great deep was no more baffling than are the variety and profundity of religion and the ever-recurrent surprises in youthful minds to most of us. Confronted with the constant problem of religious education, there always come moments when wrestling with the fourth dimension would seem to be relaxation. But the dove finally returned with something green and fresh, and so encouraged, we persevere.

It may be that I am too close to the tender age to know much about its nature and its workings. Were I further removed, I might see broad sweeps and relations now hidden from me by my closeness to them. As it is, I am so cognizant of cross-currents in all the movements I view, and so conscious of facts contrary to almost everything I might say, that I am reluctant to defend for long any position I might take. The one advantage in this is salvation from platitude—no mean thing. Yet, though forced to be tentative in great part, certain things which my own short experience has taught me are ceasing, through use, to be tentative. By them this paper is oriented. But beyond the peril of platitude is the danger of latitude. Any attempt to be entirely fair to every possible aspect would be self-defeating, and so we shall confine ourselves to certain definite points, even at the risk of a partial view.

Perhaps the best way to describe modern youth in religious terms is to appropriate Bishop Francis J. McConnell's characterization of the present state of China's cultural and religious life. He speaks of it as "Confusionism." It would be impossible to expect anything else from the tired world in which my own generation has had its eyes opened. It sees. Its vision is more often blurred than clear. Its motives are mixed. It is not at all as sure of itself as it would like to think. Often its bravado conceals its uncertainty. But its whole activity, or lack of it, seems to depend from the assumption that it has come to an end—and to a beginning. Our very natural fear is that lighting upon the place where these two seas meet, it shall run aground, and not come safe to land.

A world war cracked the retaining walls of an order four hundred

years in the making, and in the flux of ancient sanctions and the failure of long-accepted standards, with their accompaniments of extreme nationalism, economic insecurity, and decadent art, it can be no matter for wonder to find the rising generation quite at sea, sustained only by the life-raft of all new generations, an almost invincible hopefulness. And the tossing waves of our modern confusion threaten to overwhelm even that. The result, all too often, is an acceptance of the old phrase—"any port in a storm." Too many young people despair of finding a solid ground for a planned life, and give themselves to opportunism. It may be pointed out that their despair is shallow, because they have failed to wait until all the facts are present, and that they frequently ask their questions of life without expecting or awaiting an answer. The disintegration of the world order is so vast and at the same time so insidious in its influences on developing minds, that a disillusionment very different from that which ordinarily comes with maturity possesses large numbers of young people. Of course, this usually comes about unconsciously in them, but that does not lessen the reality. The results are dire, for the mortification of ideals sets in, and cynicism is the end.

All of this leaves no room for easy optimism, and certainly ought to rule out the rather naïve idea that straight thinking rises from the freshness of youth. Two things come easily to the young mind: idealism and enthusiasm. But these can just as easily backfire. The rising dictatorships of Europe depend for their strength upon the driving enthusiasm of young men who are also idealistic. And certain very conservative religious groups are highly efficient in enlisting the support of young people. Whether the idealism thus expressed is spurious or merely faulty is another matter, and of course the most important. But surely the supposition, at least as old as Rousseau, that the fresh and unclogged powers of the developing soul will naturally move toward perfection, indeed, already have the elements of perfection in them, cannot stand against the facts. In other words, the fresh reactions of youth, however untrammelled by antiquated social influences, are not necessarily to be trusted. The romantic notion that the primitive simplicity of man's inherent goodness will spontaneously emerge, when it is unhindered, is discredited. Whatever of it may have survived the last century has surely been overwhelmed by the sad record of the last twenty years. Original sin and total depravity may have received undue emphasis among our fathers, but Saint Paul, Saint Augustine, and John Calvin were

moving in the realm of hard experience, guided by deep insight. Idealism and enthusiasm are not self-propelling, but in this world where creative personality is the end and aim of existence, and moral freedom its native air, retrogression is as much a possibility as progress.

Yet enthusiasm is contagious, and idealism, however faulty, is a cool wind through a tired world. And since action follows quickly in their train, impatience with clogged age and experience, itself bewildered by a world in flux, from which stability has fled, leads to a stronger trust in the freshness of youth. This has its reflection in the cocksureness and also the disillusionment—both can exist in the same mind—of many young people. It is as if they said, "This world is a mess, and all your experience and wisdom seem helpless. At least, we can do no worse, and it may be that our freedom from antique inhibitions and outworn modes of thought and action will find the way out." But sad to tell, the places on the face of the earth where youth's idealism and enthusiasm have taken this lead, now appear as the danger-spots of the world. And in every instance, with the exception of Russia, youth is ruled by chauvinism and nationalistic reaction under the illusions of a Golden Age. Even in Russia the theoretical basis of youth's driving enthusiasm is a materialistic philosophy which was really outmoded with the nineteenth century. In our own country and in England the prevailing mood among young people seems to be one of indifference. "Something ought to be done, but it is not my job." At least nothing at all has yet enlisted the passionate adherence of youth in the English-speaking lands.

Now where does religion enter into this picture? There's the rub! It's not enough to say that all of which we have been speaking has religious elements in it, and that the sustaining power, whenever any appears, is essentially religious. That only fogs the facts. And many of us have a feeling that we are high and dry on the edge of a sea of indifference. For the moment I am disregarding the clouds the size of a man's hand, which give all of us courage. But it would be a matter of fooling ourselves as to the magnitude of our task if we should blink the fact that a majority of young people have no hunger for religion. They hunger for an abundant life, but they do not expect to find it in religion, or by means of religion. Much of the talk about the world being "hungry for religion" is pious twaddle. To qualify by saying that the hunger is unconscious and unnamed makes no real difference. If it is meant that the world has the scurvy

because it has left out of its diet the mysterious vitamins which make a healthy organism, I can follow that. But let us not fool ourselves. Why is it that youth, in such large part, seeks an abundant life apart from religion?

First of all, it ought always to be remembered by those who are interested in the life and religion of youth, that the adult tends to demand too much from immature minds. I was once rebuked by a fourteen-year-old boy, who said in effect, "You expect me to say and do things which I don't know. And some of the things you speak about never happened to me." Just so. And it is equally applicable to twenty-one and twenty-five. Much of our pessimism is cancelled when we see that the standards of adult experience must not be used to measure the thought and action of the younger generation. After all, "high religion," with all its "disinterestedness" and its ordering of desire, is the product of maturity. The bursting bloom of expansive youth cannot be expected to compare with the cultivated flowering of ripe experience, unless it be in wild beauty. I have often consoled myself for the lack of response on the part of young people to certain things I have felt very important by reminding myself that the sensitivity was not yet there. Youth learns but gradually, for instance, that joy is tempered, deepened, and given meaning by suffering and the conscious acceptance of unavoidable and insurmountable limitations. The fact that youth has not been forced to compromise its ideals and give hostages to fortune causes it to look askance at much mature religion. Its comparative security and self-sufficiency are penetrated only by the continued assaults of mature experience, until one day the miracle happens, and life receives new meaning, with a sense of dependence, precisely as Schleiermacher understood it. As an illustration of this point, remember that Schleiermacher produced work of effectiveness and brilliance while yet—for a scholar—very young. But the very earliest traces of his greatest idea were not expressed until he was thirty-one, and the rounded concept of religion's essence being a consciousness of dependence did not appear till he was fifty-three. I place so much emphasis upon this because I regard Schleiermacher's idea to be of almost final importance in a sufficient religion. With the deepening of life, the advancing soul finds more and more stretches of experience that are barren without adequate cosmic grounding. One of the joys of a pastor's life is to see a young couple seeking a firmer hold on the Fatherhood of God because a child has come to them, and

another is to watch a young mind meeting the widening years with increasing sureness because religion has become a growing thing. I have seen both, and my own deepening life will bring more.

There is in youth a natural tendency, then, to seek the abundant life apart from religion, because of its own immaturity and partial realization of the potentialities of religion. But even more persuasive against the claims of religion is the materialism of our age. This is not a new foe of religion. It has been the arch-enemy of the spirit-filled life since the dawn of conscience. In all times men have felt the tension between their idealisms and the ever-present lure of acquisition. Vital religion has usually been able to hold its own, with more than an even chance of success, unless it has been weakened by its own institutional expressions, which ought to be its allies. Like waves there have come the heights of religious influence on the affairs of men, and then there have been the low places between. How entirely a matter of fact this is, it is needless to prove, for only a moderate knowledge of history will substantiate it. Probably without exception the times of small influence were also those of institutional inflexibility. Fortunately, those periods were always succeeded by eruptions releasing anew the religious forces which had been threatened with institutional smothering. This has always been a source of unceasing wonder to me: that the Jewish-Christian tradition has been able repeatedly and almost predictably to break out of its cramped expressions into new life.

The spirit of materialism is a constant drag, and is present in our social body all of the time, like the germ of a disease. All it needs to become active and successful is to have the resistance lowered. This is now our spiritual state. It is not much to be wondered at if young people succumb rather easily. I am convinced that for very many young people religion is so distorted by their views of its institutional expressions that they turn with something of relief to a beef-steak or a dollar-bill. I can name boy after boy who has gone down in this defeat. And with almost all of them it has been more than a simple choice between what they knew they should do and the temptations of their lesser selves. It went far deeper than that, and finally rested on a feeling that religion as they saw it was not challenging, and did not seem to have any promise of abundance about it. It is of no use to say to such ones that they should wait until they know more. They have to make their decisions now. They cannot wait. The nascent idealism in them does not find enough answering it in the expressions of

religion which they are accustomed to meet, because the institutional aspects hold much they cannot follow. So, with their usual forthrightness, they dump out the baby with the bath.

This is a phenomenon not different in kind from that which appears in all generations, but it surely is different in degree. I wonder if we yet realize what strains the last twenty years have put on the institutions of religion. In the break-up that has followed the war, with the collapse of old sanctions, all institutions have been forced into the defensive. It is not necessary to point out the flaws and fissures in the church. They have caused us tears and sorrow the more poignant because we love the ark in which our treasure has come to us. But much which was bread to our fathers is no nourishment to our juniors. Lumping eternal religion and its temporal expressions together, they tell themselves and us that there is precious little in them of an abundant life. For all too many young people religion not only has no radiance, but no flavor either. And when that has become true, "the sights that dazzle, and the tempting sounds" of an earthbound life work their deception, seeming themselves to provide the abundant life.

There is much which contradicts all of this. But let us not be deceived by our small successes, while the greater issues pass on our blind sides. Institutions have immense vitality, and although outmoded, always manage to do some effective work. Otherwise there would be nothing at all preserved to provide reform and new life. But there is handwriting on the wall, and we must learn its meaning. The handwriting is the large defection of many of our most promising young people from the life of the church in a frank preference for material advantage, tempered perhaps by a vague humanitarian idealism, which is all that remains from the teaching of religion to which they were exposed.

There is one special group of young people who should be mentioned, and they are the ones who have turned their backs upon religion, and more particularly the church, because they feel that they constitute a barrier to social reform. Here again is that feeling of the institution hampering the spirit it is supposed to enshrine, and here again that turning aside from both. Often, of course, there is a respectful bow made in the direction of the church's own ideals. But religion as an experience and as a mode of life is not considered the way to abundance of life, whether temporal or otherwise. They point to the shameful record of institutionalized religion,

and look scornfully on our pussyfooting. They are right and they are wrong. It is fairly evident how that is so. But this group does not trouble one so much as those who will say that the church has large responsibilities toward social justice, yet do not desire to do anything about it themselves. This was strikingly revealed in a questionnaire collected recently in several cities. And I can remember from my college days how we would sigh and squirm when some chapel speaker would forget himself so far as to tell us that a new world was waiting for us to fashion it. Youth is very touchy about being roused to responsibility. It takes most of it out in talking. Any fraternity house bull session will demonstrate that! But this is all part of the same general symptom. The heroic ages of religion have been able to do just exactly the thing which we now find extremely difficult. Nor is it probable that the recreance of youth to the call of duty and opportunity is altogether the root of the matter. The thing which worries us is that the group which actively campaigns for practical measures of social betterment expects little help from religion, and that those who should be roused to activity by the ideals of the church are not willing to accept responsibility. If you want to see vividly what I mean, get up in a meeting of a Socialist Party Local, as I have done, and raise the question of religion. Then see what happens!

So much for general considerations. In order to give more definiteness to the points already touched and to illustrate certain others, allow me to introduce to you certain young men of my acquaintance, who among themselves make up most of the outstanding types of attitude toward religion among young people.

Harold is just past twenty-five. There has been no strong religious background in his training, and in a number of conversations he has given me the impression of almost complete spiritual illiteracy. He is an excellent example of the attitude which many young people have toward religion when their training in it has been at best perfunctory. His training in everything else has been excellent, and he holds a responsible position in the city government. Once we found ourselves in a discussion about the nature of God. I kept drawing him out, and I soon found that he was one of those who are still caught in the backwash of nineteenth-century science, with his own particular crudities attached. For example: he finally arrived at a definition of God as the summation of everything we do not know. Then he admitted that he would have to say that advancing knowledge

could conceivably abolish God. It is interesting in this connection to hear President Hutchins of Chicago say to the December Convocation of the University, "Our bewilderment has resulted from our notion that salvation depends on information." But Harold is far from bewildered. He has thought just enough to give him something to say in an argument, and that is enough for him. When I asked him how he accounted for cause and effect with an idea of God such as he has, he replied that he did not see what they had to do with each other. Things happen one after another, and there is no particular problem about it.

By Harold and by various other young people like him, to say nothing of certain of their elders, I have become convinced that one of the greatest needs of everyone who presumes to teach religion is an adequate idea of causality. This is of course an old philosophical problem, but its importance for the philosophy of religion is not always realized. One's ideas about the cosmos, about the availability of God, about the worth of moral effort, and almost every other matter of deep import must reckon with causality. For my own part I can never be grateful enough for the opportunity of absorbing the tradition of Borden Parker Bowne and Edgar Sheffield Brightman. The idea of the immanence of the divine personality, willing and sustaining in the minute relationships of cause and effect, has time and again provided me with insights into the nature of reality, fruitful in the highest degree. No one who wrestles with such an idea will long remain a shallow thinker on religion. But to vast numbers of young people the problem is as far removed from reality as to my friend Harold. This is one of the vitamins religious education must provide for youth.

I happened to tell Howard that I was to prepare a paper on *Modern Youth and Religion*, and he said, "I wonder what has happened to me. I wish someone would tell me why I never go to church any more. I used to haunt the place. I was everything from chorister to crucifer. The biggest thing which ever happened to me religiously was my confirmation by Bishop Brent, when I was a boy in Buffalo. I don't remember anything he said, but there was a power in his face and in his voice. Yet so much has happened since, and there hasn't been much interest in it for years." Howard is the district manager of a large corporation, college trained, finely disciplined, splendidly equipped with a good mind, and genuinely interested in good things. He is still under twenty-five. I find him able to speak the language of religion, and well-versed in good books. But he

also is typical of a considerable section of our better trained young people. I have not yet found a good way to tell him so, but I believe that his trouble is in the lack of articulation of whatever religious thought he possesses. It has never gotten down to metaphysical rootings. The discoveries of prophetic religion and the long experience of Christianity are still academic to him. They have never made any real impact. He has had just enough of it to sense a grandeur which he does not quite grasp. He still looks back to the moment of his confirmation, for something touched him there which still holds out the promise of a deeper meaning. "But," he said, "our minister at home can be predicted to the day as to his sermons. Some of them I used to be able to anticipate in outline, and we all knew the series. It was the same old stuff. And the minister of our church in the college town never hit me." Do you suppose he could be talking about us? I know he could have gone elsewhere, and so I told him. But are we taking care to feed such minds and hearts as Howard's, who from time to time see a gleam of the towers of that City not made with hands, and give them the solid instruction which will one day make their dreams substantial?

From Howard I have learned that religious education dares not fail to carry its instructions down into metaphysical foundations, with the accompanying effort to make real and attractive the treasury of experience coming from the saints and sages of the race.

Francis presents one of the most typical problems which we have to deal with in our time. He is just twenty, and he has always lived a clean, disciplined life in rather conservative surroundings of limited opportunity. But his abilities have won him a good job away from home, and he has been thrust into a new place of responsibility younger than most men come to it. Long hours we have spent together in discussion of the one thing which bothers him most. His ever-recurring question is, in the words of Canon F. R. Barry, "Why shouldn't I?" The rules of ethical conduct which he once accepted from his home and church training no longer carry the self-evident validity they once did. He is scrupulously conscientious, but his very care, combined with his restiveness under restraint, make him extremely critical. Whatever help I have been able to give him I owe to the clear thinking I have found growing out of Canon Barry's *Christianity and the New World*. I have tried to make him see that the problem of his moral conduct is not to be met by rule and regulation, except as such regimentation grows out of a religious experience.

There is no real answer to his question, "Why shouldn't I?" on the basis of his training alone. That is the appeal to authority. Barry says, "The liberals of the late nineteenth century assumed that the Christian moral principles would always hold the allegiance of men, even though dogmatic Christianity would not survive in the climate of modernity. That genial expectation has been falsified. The slow decay of Christian faith and worship proves to have undermined the moral structure. And we cannot reconstruct Christian ethics save on the basis of Christian faith (p. 7). . . . The real question about Christian ethics is therefore to show how the Christian world-view, centered upon faith in a living God and accordingly supernatural in its emphasis, can offer itself as the interpretation of our rich and manifold experience in an ever-widening and bewildering universe" (p. 10). In other words a vital personal religious experience is the source of ethical achievement. So Francis and I have learned together, as we have thrashed it out, that the way to moral certainty lies through a search for religious faith. There are large numbers of young people who are left cold by our moral preachments who need to be shown that the only answer to their question is a quest—for religious experience.

Now Walter is a Son of Thunder. He has gone violently through school, taken a fling at the theological seminary, and is now a clerk in a store while he tries to look at himself all around, and find adequate vehicles for the constantly enlarging conceptions which are growing within him. Everything he touches has a mark left on it. He really does not touch anything. He either grasps it or strikes it. An idea which comes to him becomes so much dynamite in his hands with which to blast everything established out of its sockets. In all of it there is a deep moral earnestness. He is on the search for truth with a vengeance, but I have my hands full trying to keep him from rushing roughly over the tender and delicate tendrils of intellectual and moral insight which are the beginning of wisdom. He is having the utmost difficulty to learn how to accommodate himself. He incessantly demands, without realizing all that is involved, that things ought to begin *de novo*. It is only with difficulty that he can get an organic view of the history of ideas. His impatience with the past is colossal. But I am gradually getting him to see that he spends too much time boggling at phrases, and so missing the experiences which they enshrine. His own experiences, he feels, could never be made to fit into those categories which the history of dogma, systematic theology, and

philosophy of religion have brought down to the present. If only I can finally succeed in helping him to establish the connection between the experience of the past and his own, most of his difficulty and rebellion will vanish. So with Walter I have learned that he who would teach religion must be wise as a serpent, whether he emulates the dove or not.

Robert has come from a home scarcely calculated to produce the fruits of the spirit. But in all of my dealings with youth I have never felt so rewarded and successful as I have in my efforts to open to him some wider reaches of experience. He suddenly appeared in my church one day, and since then some of the rarest joys of pastoral achievement have been mine. He has an eager, questing mind that has needed only interest on the part of someone else to bring its flowering. His letters are a constantly advancing record of an honest search for reality and rich personal character. There are such, and many of them, all waiting for the touch of a more mature religious experience to bring them out. And here, unlike Henry Adams, I know I have learned something before I am thirty: really, a good education in itself. It is that my most effective work in religious education has been in intensive cultivation of individuals. Most of us who are pastors are in constant danger of taking out our efforts in programs, curricula, and institutes. All of these must be done, but the worker in souls had better keep his hand skilled in individual relationships if he wants life to dwell in his more extended efforts. I am convinced that the prodigious labors which are going to be necessary to carry us through the anxious days ahead, when almost everything we know will have to be rebuilt, can best be accomplished by refusing to be bluffed by the bigness of that which confronts us, and by gathering little by little, with much hand-picking, a remnant to return for the rebuilding of Zion. The larger social efforts which must be made will then have vitality behind them. If we go about it this way, I do not doubt our success in winning youth increasingly to allegiance to the Kingdom of God. I am not as pessimistic as much of this may have made me appear to be. I only desire to see the facts. For my own part I am heeding the words of William James, who has said somewhere that he was done with big things, and that he intended thenceforth to labor with those capillary forces which finally rend the rocks.

The Church and Education for the Family

LELAND FOSTER WOOD

THERE has been in recent times an accelerated interest in utilizing the available resources of the church to secure a better education for family life and to aid in the achieving of such personal adjustments of married people as shall assure the most successful and happy domestic experience. It is natural to ask what the church has to contribute and I shall therefore attempt to set forth some characteristics of the religious conception of marriage, and something of the program of the church in education for family life.

A fact which is often cited to the detriment of the church is that religion seeks to conserve the values which have been achieved in the long course of human experience. To be sure, there is a temptation in this, and it often seems that religion is more concerned with fixed values or perhaps with outworn conceptions of value than with emerging ones. However, the fact that religion seeks to conserve the values of family life which have been achieved through a very long course of human experience needs to be noted. To get the thing in historical and, one might add, anthropological perspective, steadies the whole question.

The illusion that rules and codes of sex behavior are merely arbitrary, soon disappears upon careful examination of the rôle of sex in human life. Nature has been experimenting with sex for some millions of years in plants, animals and birds. During the course of the long struggle for survival in the animal world it was found that those groups in which there was most of solidarity and most of concern for the young, were the best fitted to cope with life. Even little creatures whose instincts of family unity and of solicitude for the young were very strong, outlasted the mighty forms of those creatures in which parental solicitude and group cohesion were less developed.

Though man's experience is comparatively short, and may not extend beyond a million years, yet the human race also has been experimenting with sex for quite a long period. During this course of time almost every conceivable sort of experiment for relationships of men and women has been entered into and tried out at greater or less length. While there is

little if any proof of socially approved promiscuity among any people at any time or place, yet the varieties of group relationships and group freedom; of polyandry and polygyny with variations in concubinage, in relationships of the master with the slave woman; of capricious divorce and socially controlled divorce; of variations in the mating regulations all the way from complete arrangement by the elders, even reaching to the utter non-acquaintance of husband and wife prior to the marriage day, to experimentation and hasty marriage without consent of the parents; of patriarchal families and small units; of common law marriage and tight legal contract—all these furnish adequate proof that human experience has provided what is essentially a wide range of experimentation with sex.

While the experimental mood is ascendant among us at the present time, and while it may be said that all advance in science rests at least in part upon experiment, nevertheless, it may equally be said that advance in human understanding rests upon fruitful use of experimentation already carried out and it is just as necessary in science to know what has been learned in a given field as to carry out new experiments. There is certainly no valid justification for a succession of individuals or groups ignorant or careless of previous experience going on continually to meet the same old problems with the same old mistakes. At any rate, the fact that through many thousands of years there has been a development in all the higher civilizations away from polygamy, and from capricious divorce, toward monogamy with social sanctions, is worthy of the notice of all those who assume that personal experimentation represents a scientific attitude in sex behavior.

A second characteristic of the religious view of marriage has to do with sex as a part of a life plan, the plan being more ultimate than the sex impulse, and laying claim to the allegiance of the various impulses of the person. This runs through many types of religious interpretation, from the idea of a divinely given and fixed code to a view which thinks of sex as an aid to the development of the most complete and permanent love between a man and a woman and thereby as an aid to the development of the highest type of home. The religious view is therefore not concerned merely with repression any more than an electric lighting company is concerned with the repression of electrical energy. It aims rather to route and utilize the available energy for purposes which carry forward the interests of life. While light is beautiful in itself, it would not be said that the

purposes of the lighting companies end with the production of light. Rather the production of light blends with a more ultimate aim, and flows into all the activities which people want to carry on by the help of the light given. Somewhat the same can be said of sex. It also, when rightly used, is a beautiful thing in itself, but it has its chief significance in the manner in which it contributes to a stabilized, complete, and inspiring love life, and to a complete family. This point of view is in sharp contrast with the notion that sex is the mere gratification of an impulse, or the expression of an instinct.

The instinct philosophy in general has been steadily passing out in recent years. Though by our best thinkers instinct is not now regarded as an adequate means of guidance in any type of human activity, it still has a tremendous popular vogue so far as sex is concerned. It is worthy of notice, however, that only a particular phase of instinct is singled out for favorable consideration. The person whose sex behavior is impulsive or irresponsible rationalizes this in terms of instinct. That this is a bit of special pleading is obvious on examination. How would this theory apply to some of the other so-called instincts, let us say, for example, the hunting instinct? Hunting is very widespread and appeals to something deep and apparently primal in human nature, yet the individual in a rural community would not go out into the fields and shoot down fowls or livestock and plead the hunting instinct as a justification. Yet such a plea would be quite as valid as that of the person who pleads instinct as a justification for impulsive sex behavior.

We might use the same principle and say that the soldier suffers acutely at times from fear, but never does he justify behavior on that principle. In his *Psychology and Morals*, Hadfield has facetiously pictured a scene that is fairly unthinkable—a soldier court-martialed for running away from his duty, and pleading the instinct of fear. On this the presiding officer of the court congratulates him on having had the courage to act on his own convictions rather than upon the Victorian notions of the misguided Sergeant Major who believed that he ought to have done otherwise.

Someone may say that rigid forms of behavior which violate instinctive promptings are very costly in the nervous life of the individual. The soldier who is terrified at his situation has to repress that terror, and becomes shell-shocked. The individual who represses his sex instinct becomes neu-

rotic from these repressions. Possibly the repression of impulses is always carried out at some cost, but in the ledger of life we must set the gains over against the costs. It requires no argument to prove that the irresponsible carrying out of our impulses would cost vastly more than their repression on behalf of civilized life or the claims of our ideals.

No responsible person would say that all the psychological damage and frustration is on the side of repression, and that there is no nervous damage resulting from the emotional tangles of those who act irresponsibly in their sex behavior. Nor could it be said that these tangles are merely due to the clash between the individual and the arbitrary notions of society. The individual may be destroyed by the clash of unorganized forces within himself.

The person who through preoccupation or enslavement with his impulses is unable to achieve a unification of personality is a casualty on the side of non-repression. There is no sort of social situation, from a baseball game to a formal party, in which it is not necessary, in order for the activity to be possible at all, to put crude impulse under the sway of the social situation. It is as true in our civilized life in general as it is in a game of football, that when the rules disappear the game also is destroyed.

This leads us to the point that individualism, under whatever guise, does not work. To be sure, we need individuals and strongly accentuated personalities, but the significance of an individual is not in the extent to which he gives reign to his impulses, but in the extent to which he can harness his powers and work without undue friction and dissipation of energy. The outcome of this line of thought is that religion is right when it holds that the impulses with which the human being is richly endowed, do not bring their guidance along with them, but must be utilized in accordance with a pattern of life. In a word, life must be culture-shaped rather than instinct-ridden. The practical problem is to conserve the interests of civilization and of idealism, and at the same time to provide for a rich, emotional life of the individual. The civilization which makes the individual merely a cog in a vast mechanism needs profound overhauling, and the ethical system in which repression is made an end in itself needs re-interpretation.

Another characteristic of the religious conception of sex is that the individual must organize this as well as the other aspects of his life, as a social person and not as a mere individualist. In this respect it takes issue

sharply with aggravated individualism. In order to bring the hyper-individualistic theory of sex into a clear statement, we quote from Havelock Ellis, who has said many good things and also this:

"Sexual union for a woman, as much as for a man, is a physiological fact: it may also be a spiritual fact, but it is not a social act. It is, on the contrary, an act which, beyond all other acts, demands retirement and mystery for its accomplishment. That, indeed, is a general human, almost zoological fact. Moreover, this demand for mystery is more especially made by woman in virtue of her greater modesty, which, we have reason to believe, has a biological basis. It is not until a child is born or conceived that the community has any right to interest itself in the sexual acts of its members. The sexual act is of no more concern to the community than any other private physiological act. It is an impertinence, if not an outrage, to seek to inquire into it. But the birth of a child is a social act. Not what goes into the womb but what comes out of it concerns society. The community is invited to receive a new citizen. It is entitled to demand that that citizen shall be worthy of a place in its midst and that he shall be properly introduced by a responsible father and a responsible mother."¹

There is, however, no connection between the mystery of which he speaks and the irresponsibility which he claims. How the psychological life of the individual can be isolated from his social relationships to such a degree is not quite evident. Sex behavior is sure to affect the emotional life, and this affects the social relationships, which are based on emotional attitudes to persons. Let us be more concrete. In family life each individual is dependent upon the others. Every married person is either a husband or a wife, and every unmarried person is either a son or a daughter, and usually these persons are brothers or sisters. To make good completely as a husband or wife requires that one bring his best self to the relationship, and that he devote to it the resources of a unified personality. To bring less than this to the relationship of marriage means to court failure from the start. The person who sacrifices his opportunity to achieve the finest sort of marital relationship for the sake of freedom to let his emotional life flow capriciously here and there is paying too high a price for that sort of freedom. Moreover, he is defrauding the one who in marriage invests her whole self and hazards her all in the enterprise of establishing a complete family life.

¹ *Sex in Relation to Society*, VI, p. 417.

Furthermore, where children are concerned, it is obvious that a father whose interest is diverted from his home by so powerful an emotional pre-occupation as an extra-marital sex adventure, or a series of them, cannot be a complete father to a boy or to a girl. Being a father is a man-sized job. To be merely a male progenitor is nothing of great social or psychological consequence. A home in which either the father or the mother is an emotionally divided personality, and in which the unity of parenthood as a psychological matrix for the growing life of the child is destroyed, is a very incomplete and faulty home. The fault of this theory is that an isolated individualism is seen as the normal mode of human existence, whereas the modern social view of human personality and group life contemplates a social and psychic inter-relatedness. Furthermore, when we scrutinize the concept of the individual, who is thought of as having an unlimitable personal freedom, and society, which is thought of as impertinent if it seeks to limit that freedom, we find that the individual and society are not so sharply antithetical as we at first supposed. The individual and the group are aspects of the social process. Neither does the individual exist merely for himself nor solely for society, but the person exists in an old and a complicated life process in which there are both individual values and responsibilities and group values and responsibilities, and the values and responsibilities of each must be envisaged in their relationship with those of the other. The group must preserve the individual values, and the individual must respect the group values, lest his individualism should destroy itself and the group.

Along with all other types of freedom the individual does well to guard that freedom in himself which makes it possible for him to give to his mate such a loyal and unified love personality as to promise the most and the best for marriage. Nothing but confusion and loss can come from discussion of the sex problem in terms that overlook the higher aspects of man's life.

Marriage is not a situation merely, but a spirit. Ideal marriage is the spirit of loyalty, solicitude and devotion between two persons. When these persons become parents, such an atmosphere provides the best background for the nurture of children.

Sex expression within limits set by the nature of man and woman, in terms of family life set toward the highest personal and social goals, providing for the enrichment of the deep emotional life of man and woman

in their relationships with each other and with their children, brings stability and beauty into life. After all, life is an art, and the requirements of art are exacting.

In a social world where redirection of individual lives and also of the social process is always in order, the individual has a right to oppose the group either for the sake of his own welfare, when that of the group is not jeopardized thereby, or for the sake of a better understood group welfare. The rebellious and uncompromising individual is often a peg around which society turns a new corner of progress, but there is no heroism in being socially schismatic when the individual benefit is questionable and social values are jeopardized.

In the end man values his morality more highly than his irresponsibility. While in finance bad money drives out good, in ethics, the contrary is the case. I know nothing more favorable to this human race than the fact that in the long course of experience, it has been constantly raising its codes of ethics. I do not believe that men will ever respond very much to a theory of irresponsibility in sex. If we can say to the banker, "We entrusted our economic welfare to you and because you were unfaithful to the trust, you must go to prison;" shall not humanity also condemn those who betray the domestic welfare of their fellows?

A fourth characteristic is that religion regards marriage as sacred, based on duty and character. The deepest welfare of the persons in question is involved. Happiness, health, intellectual growth, and spiritual advancement are either greatly helped or gravely jeopardized. The sacredness of marriage is also in part a thing to be achieved by the two who enter it. For this reason, sex conduct and all other phases of conduct have more than a casual significance, just as the question what sort of material is woven into a tapestry and whether it is woven in accordance with the pattern has more than a casual significance so far as the tapestry is concerned; or as the question whether a surgeon operates skillfully or awkwardly and whether the operation is really indicated in the patient's condition has more than a casual significance for the patient.

The religious view of marriage thinks of it as one of the primary situations for the development of character and for working creatively with God in the creation of new life both in procreation and in nurture. In this sense the integrity of the home is basic to the stability of the life process, and the home is the basic means of the perpetuation of our highest

ideals and our finest personal culture. For this reason the church emphasizes the portion of religious education and education for family building that takes place in the home.

Both the church and the home co-operate in character building. Their basic contribution is in the development of those qualities of character and personality that make people worth tying up to for life. Without such qualities all information about family life or theories of adjustment in it will be inadequate to produce the domestic happiness and success which we seek.

While the church sets forth those permanent elements in character and in human relationships which make successful marriages more likely, it must take account of the particular changes and problems which are characteristic of the day in which we live. Some of these are as follows:

There is a changing basis of ethics from dependence upon fiat or fixed rules or customs, to a scientific and experimental attitude. In the end this will mean that sex ethics will be determined in accordance with the biological and emotional nature of men and women. The character of family life will take into consideration the emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual growth of children. Those types of behavior will be approved which contribute to the building of the highest type of family life. In time, sex ethics may be related to social art in the sense of building up the finest personality and social relationships rather than merely as austere moral duty.

In this period while an old basis of morality is being relinquished and a new one has not been completely gained, there is a changed attitude with reference to marriage and divorce. The rapid increase of divorce makes the marriage bond seem more fragile than in earlier years. While persons usually marry with the expectation of permanence, the idea that the marriage might not turn out to be a permanent one is distinctly above the horizon in many cases. The church cannot but be deeply concerned with the problem of divorce, yet I find that religious leaders are moving in the direction of dealing with the causes of failure in marriage rather than in the direction of dealing with it by legislation or by placing a darker stigma upon it. Divorce is a symptom of marriage failure and marriage failure is more serious than failure in almost any other undertaking.

In the next place, changes in the general conditions of our modern urban life affect the family, with crowding, frequent changes in residence,

and less stable social relationships than in the days of the old family homestead, of intimate neighborhood ties, and a few life-long associations. The home and the family on the average take a slighter place in the life of the individual to-day than in the generations just preceding us.

Smaller quarters suggest smaller families, and the constant lowering of the birth rate affects the family situation. There is a widespread knowledge of contraception along with the necessity in many homes of limiting the number of children. There is also a new emphasis on the desirability of spacing those who are born, both with consideration of the health of the mother and for the best interests of the child and the family in general. At the same time the acute controversies that have developed around this subject of birth control plunge modern young people into an atmosphere of strident discord of opinion. A great number of church leaders have expressed themselves with the utmost clearness as to the need of spacing and limiting the number of children born, in accordance with the welfare of the family and of society. At the same time there is the serious problem of large numbers of people with a good inheritance and favorable economic position, who are unduly niggardly in their contribution of children to society. The question of the regulation of births in accordance with social intelligence and a high regard for the welfare of the mothers, needs to be balanced by a decrease in the reproduction of the unfit and an increase in the size of families of those who are in the most favorable position to furnish children of a high type of heredity and training. Often the largest houses have the smallest families and the most pretentious streets have the fewest children living on them.

Another characteristic of our day is the increasing freedom and influence of women, and an increasing expressiveness and influence of youth. In the new freedom and demands of women there is the possibility of much good. The wife and mother, when she was a household drudge, could not be her best self. Woman has a higher position of influence in the family in America than elsewhere. She also has a higher position to-day than she had formerly, and thus it is possible for her to become an even more powerful influence in the lives of her children. When woman finds herself in her new freedom, I believe she will have an increasing influence on public thought with reference to all these questions. Meanwhile those women who espouse a type of freedom which is destructive of family life will put back their own movement; and especially they will

jeopardize the position of the older woman, who, just when she ought to live her life with queenly dignity, will find herself in a position of disregard, neglect and disappointment.

Christian teachers have always asserted that their religion has freed women from old disabilities and has put them essentially on an equality with men. Woman's freedom depends upon achieving a position such that she may appear as a person among persons. This makes for convenience in civilized inter-relationships. When persons get together as artists, musicians, scientists, educators, or religious leaders, it makes for convenience if sex can be largely disregarded. The sex-obsessed person upsets the equilibrium of these inter-relationships on the cultural level. As a practical consideration there must be a preoccupation with the normal non-sexual interests of life if real freedom of the sexes is to be advanced. This will in the end put even mating itself on a more secure basis. Freedom of personality is contingent upon keeping this powerful impulse out of situations in which it is irrelevant, and in making it complete in the place where it belongs.

The increasing influence of young people, in spite of their inexperience, ought to prove a benefit to family relationships. Young people naturally respond to ideals. They believe in life and in one another. In them the stream of life flows with a flash and a sparkle. It is only when they come under the influence of unwholesome older persons, or bad conditions that such people have created, that they become cynical. The new problems which young people have to meet include unfavorable economic conditions which make it very difficult for the young man to support a family. This results in a large number of young women continuing to work after marriage. Just at present the abnormally large number of those who have little or no income seems to compel the long postponement of many marriages which would be normally taking place, thus producing a trying situation.

Another characteristic of to-day is that there is a recognition of the need of strengthening the inner ties which hold people together in a time when the outer ties appear to be less effective. While many persons become restive in unwelcome bonds, it is recognized that marriages may be very secure if the members realize the need of preserving and enhancing those forms of attractiveness which originally caught the attention and secured the love of the mate, and of continuing in the ways of endearment that

made courtship satisfying. Romantic love is still emphasized as the best foundation for marriage but this must be supplemented by intelligent habits of personality adjustment. The emotional tide of original romance will ebb sooner or later unless the love life is fed from other sources. The romance of married love will not die out, if only people recognize that the love life of a married pair is a structure that they must build up together through the years, and one into which enter thousands of daily acts of devotion, kindness, forbearance, sympathy, helpfulness, generosity, self-sacrifice and companionship in the high adventure of life. Such a love grows with time, and is somewhat secure from the ravages of emotional accidents.

The churches have their own unique service to render in the movement for better family life. The church is, among other things, the one great going concern for adult education which brings together regularly millions of people. There is an ever growing number of parents' groups and classes for special study under the auspices of the churches.

The church emphasizes to the young parent the importance of the atmosphere of the home in the development of the child, and stresses the enormous educational significance of the period when the personality of the child is first emerging and getting its lines of development started. The importance of this period is emphasized by all educators. The church also emphasizes the fact that children are being given their impressions of life and of marriage in the quality of relationships which exist among the members of their families. The home of the little child helps to make or mar the second home which in years to come he will set up for himself.

When the time for sex education comes, as it will in the early years, the church, through its young parents' classes, through contacts of individual parents with the leaders and through use of the best literature for the purpose, can help prepare the parents to give the information that needs to be given. And especially, since the realm of sex has its moral and religious implications, the church is in the best position to reinterpret sex in such a way that parents will tell their children the simple facts that they need to know. If an unwholesome point of view shared by religious people has made trouble in the past, the wholesome and reverent attitude which frees the mind from shame, evasion, lying or distorted emphasis in this field is overdue. For the older boys and girls and young people, there are courses which are coming into wide use for church-school classes, for groups

in summer camps and assemblies, and for discussion in young people's societies and other selected groups.

In bringing the young people together under wholesome influences and providing a wide range and constant recurrence of social contacts, young people are assisted in finding and choosing their life mates.

A type of preparation for marriage which has been going on quietly for a considerable period, but is now receiving wide attention, is the service which pastors may render through pre-marital interviews. Some ministers make this an invariable rule. The procedure varies from a single talk with the couple to a series of meetings, some together and some separately. Pastors who have done this work for a long period report astonishingly favorable results in the high average of success of the families which they have helped join together. As rapidly as the clergy can be trained for this work, they will enter into a great field of usefulness. After all, the person who actually marries a couple has a unique opportunity to help them. Some pastors make it a custom to ask all young people whom they marry to come to them in case they need help in their adjustments. It is better for a young couple to take their troubles to the minister who married them and who wants them to make a success, than to take their case into court.

There is a rapidly increasing number of church clinics and family adjustment centers, from those in which the pastor sets aside certain hours for such cases, to well organized groups with the professional services of physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, case workers and lawyers, in addition to the minister as special counsellor in religious problems. While the psychiatrist, the social worker, the judge of the court of domestic relations, the family physician and others render a great service to families, the minister of religion, whose business it is to interpret life as a whole, has his own unique place of service. A further service of great importance is the regular follow up of persons whom the clergyman has married. In this service some ministers show a fine ingenuity and a high solicitude.

In all this sex education ceases to be thought of as merely a counsel for avoiding evil, and is thought of as a means of understanding and achieving a great and positive good in the marriage relationship.

The joys and benefits of family life are so great and its tragedies so devastating that the church can well afford to devote a generous amount of its attention to promoting the welfare and happiness of the family.

The Christian Cult of Violence

JEROME DAVIS

(With Comment by REINHOLD NIEBUHR)

EVER since Jesus Christ so supremely demonstrated the use of moral force through suffering and sacrifice for the common people and paid the price of his spiritual consecration by death on the cross, Christians have been struggling to interpret the implications of the Christian way of life. Down through all the ages the majority of Christians have accepted the necessity of violence. They have in effect believed that the end justifies the means. The Crusades were a glaring instance of the tragedy of this policy. In international conflict we have a modern example of this strategy and technique. In the World War over twenty-seven million lives were snuffed out by armies all of whom were ostensibly waging the conflict in the name of a crucified Christ. This led to a profound reaction on the part of Christians against violence so widespread as to be unparalleled.

To be sure, opposition to the philosophy of mass murder (war) has always existed. The Quakers furnish perhaps the most notable modern example. It remained, however, for the past few years to see the rise of a group of Christian "pacifists" who have renounced war only to embrace the philosophy of violence in the class struggle. Some of them have been deeply influenced by the Russian example, where the capitalistic system has been overthrown through a violence technique. The Russian leaders, they feel, won their place and maintained their power only by a technique of armed force. They say, "Violence is inevitable in a world like this. How else is there hope of overthrowing the injustices of capitalism?"

Reinhold Niebuhr, for instance, whose position is somewhat vague, is apparently one of this group. He says, "If we should agree that we will use non-violent coercion in behalf of the disinherited but will discourage any coercion which may issue in violence, we feel that we would give an undue moral advantage to that portion of the community which is always using non-violent coercion against the disinherited." Again he declares, "Nothing is clearer than that a pure religious idealism must issue in a

policy of non-resistance which makes no claims to be socially efficacious." He frankly admits that he has "chosen on the whole to support the devil of vengeance against the devil of hypocrisy." In other words, he believes that we are all caught in a violent and vicious social system, that our choice lies not between violence and no violence, but rather between more or less violence.

This philosophy is very appealing to thousands of sincere Christians. They see no other way out when the final crisis comes except to use machine guns. A brilliant Negro religious leader, after reading one of Reinhold Niebuhr's books, told me that although he had been a pacifist he had now come to the conclusion that he would be perfectly willing to use machine guns in any race conflict provided he felt that he could win. The sole test of whether to use machine guns or not was whether it would leave the Negro group in control of the situation or whether they themselves would be shot and trampled under foot.

Before accepting this position too uncritically let us remind ourselves what is the central purpose of the Christian life. Is not its fundamental purpose the progressive realization of spiritual values, among others love, brotherhood, invincible good-will? Granting that the goal of war may conceivably include such values, what about the methods and means of conflict?

It seems clear to me that means must not be diametrically contradictory to ends. On the contrary every technique, every strategy, every means must always strengthen spiritual values and so help to create through the very process itself the spiritual values sought. This is far from ruling out coercion. Coercion must be used by religious leaders because, strange as it may seem, that is part of the process of creating spiritual values, including liberty itself. Injustice can never be overthrown except by the use of moral force; sometimes this involves merely moral persuasion, at other times physical coercion. Coercion against evil and injustice is indispensable to the democratic process, not so punishment which takes human life.

We must use coercion when freedom is jeopardized but it must be a coercion which stops short of the deliberate and intentional snuffing out of collective human life. Eternal spiritual values are ordinarily not enhanced by a process involving the deliberate and direct taking of human life by imperfect human agents. Even after a prolonged judicial process irreparable mistakes are sometimes made when capital punishment is used. How

much more dangerous the wiping out of collective human life by revolutionists, patriots, and "Christians" inflamed by emotions for a goal they think necessary!

Nevertheless, to withhold approval from the use of weapons of killing does not mean that the Christian must condone wrong and remain impotent before injustice. It is necessary for him to act, to sacrifice his own life perhaps in the effort to bring about justice and to transform the wrongdoers. A study of social movements and social progress demonstrates that on the whole it is not the use of machine guns which has brought about justice. Even without a Civil War slavery would have been overthrown. We need not use a technique which by means of guns and bayonets destroys the earthly career of human personality. Yet Christians cannot, they must not, remain quiescent and prostrate before a dominant capitalistic order which thwarts a Christian social order. Compulsion is necessary in our society, but it must be a compulsion which is based on the greatest good to the greatest number, taking into account the infinite worth of each human personality. Coercion and love are not inconsistent. On the contrary, love always demands coercion to some degree. A mother can never permit one child habitually to dominate another. To do so would be the negation of love. In our imperfect society organized so that the few can exploit the many, coercive action against anti-social groups is just as necessary an expression of love as is similar action within the family. Mahatma Gandhi has shown that group coercion may be used with striking effect even against the mighty power of British imperialism. It seems probable that England will eventually be compelled to yield and to permit India to have self-determination.

If it is said that Mr. Gandhi's strategy of non-violent coercion results in the loss of life, that some of his followers do not follow that technique completely, this is no more than to say that anyone who follows the way of love will inevitably face conflict. He may lose his own life as Jesus did on the cross; his followers may not live up to the high ideal of the Master, and violence may be used. The fact that some do not follow it is no reason why the higher technique is invalid.

Many of us refuse to support either the "devil of vengeance" or the "devil of hypocrisy." We believe we must oppose a dying social system and expose the hypocrisy of capitalism as it exists. We feel that the highest technique does involve the use of non-violent coercion. We believe

that labor should be organized everywhere. We believe in strikes. These are nothing more nor less than a co-operative process, withholding labor when injustice would otherwise be done. Often strikes have educative results both to the employer and the employee. The entire movement of impartial arbitration is in large measure the result of a strike. To say that violence accompanies strikes and is even practiced by some of the organized workers is merely to say that some members of organized labor are not fully Christian or are not fully prepared to follow the highest Christian way. To say that people may starve because of strikes and hence it is a technique of violence in another form means little. The way of coercive love may indirectly cause violence and death, because the strands of good and evil in life are inextricably bound together. Jesus' way of life caused his death on the cross, and the compulsion of his love has caused thousands of others to die since. As Gandhi has so well shown, even the unemployed in Lancashire, England, understood that although his policy in India may have contributed to their suffering, he was not at fault. One test of a coercive policy is whether its victims in their higher spiritual moments recognize that it is a just and spiritual policy. Home spinning in India as a protest against British imperialism is applauded even by some of those it hurts. A policy of the deliberate murder of opponents through civil war is rarely understandable, much less applauded by those whom it kills.

Reinhold Niebuhr charges that those who oppose violence are unrealistic. On the contrary it seems to me that those who accept the position that violence is necessary and must be endorsed by everyone are the ones who are unrealistic. The actual fact is that America does not need to have preached to it a doctrine of violence. There is infinitely more danger that Americans will use violence when they ought not to than that they will not use violence when they ought to. The grave danger and threat to American institutions is that Christians will use violence in the coming years, not that they will fail to do so. As things now stand it would be a tragedy for Christians, no matter what their position, to use violence. Violence is the surest way to hand America over to some form of fascism, which means the success of the very philosophy against which Mr. Niebuhr himself would be most violently opposed. If we look at America in a realistic way it seems probable that the chance of civil war is remote, that for a long time to come the only choice that radical Christians will have is to work in a non-violent way. If the time should come, and sooner than some of us think, when

revolution breaks out in American life and the small group of workers attempts to dispossess the capitalists, even then the need will be for those who have a vision of a higher technique, a technique which does not bow down before the devil of vengeance or the devil of hypocrisy, but which stands forth uncompromisingly in favor of a philosophy based on a Father God and the brotherhood of man, a philosophy of justice, mercy and love—the constructive forces in the world.

I am quite willing to grant that if capitalism is seriously threatened by the workers in the near future violence probably will be used. I am not ready to admit that if enough Christians, even thirty per cent of our population, were willing to use non-violent coercion and were willing to sacrifice themselves if necessary to overthrow exploitation, this change could not be brought about by non-violent means.

In reply, someone may cite the Russian precedent—"There violence was used to overthrow power and prestige, and was this not the only road? How else could the Tsar and the forces of reaction have been overthrown?" I would answer that just because there are likely to be so few Christians who are willing to go the way of the cross, it is likely that violence will be used, but let us clearly recognize that if violence is used it is a lower technique, it is making use of the devil of vengeance instead of higher and more ethical means.

In 1905, by the simple use of a strike, the Russians were able to secure revolutionary changes from the Tsar. Later most of these grants were repudiated, but the difficulty was that the great masses of the Russian people were not willing to pay the price of non-violent coercion. It may be said that the mass of the people will never be willing to go the way of the cross, to use non-violent coercion if it means sacrifice. This is probably true, so that in our imperfect society we must look forward to future world wars and future revolutions. Because this is true and the mass of the people do not see the possibilities for this higher spiritual technique of moral force is no reason why we should surrender and use the lower forms of force. Christians who have once sensed the great moral possibilities of the technique of non-violent coercion, or organization of the workers for the workers and by the workers in peaceful ways, should not sacrifice their principles merely because the majority drifts into violence. The great need of America and the world is for larger and larger numbers of people to see the possibilities of the absolute rejection of hypocritical approval of capital-

ism on the one hand and yet see the necessity of collective coercion in non-violent ways on the other.

But some may ask, "What should the Christian actually do if a revolutionary group in Russia seizes the power by force through violence?" It seems to me the answer is clear. Since both sides are here using violence, violence is not the crucial issue. The crucial issue is which side has more of justice. The Christian must support the side which on the whole stands for love and justice. The Christian who sees the vision of non-violent coercion must urge the use of this technique. Yet he must not condemn and oppose the side which stands for social justice because it does not comprehend the highest technique of non-violent coercion. But for those who have the higher vision, who sense the possibilities of love and good will in action, they must themselves refuse to participate in the use of machine guns and bullets.

In the Russian revolution the need was not for more preaching of violence. Lenin and his supporters would have won regardless of the attitude of Christian theoreticians. Had there been enough of the population who were willing to use the technique of non-violent coercion, that policy would have won. Because violence ruled, it does not follow that the leader with a higher ideal should man the machine guns. [The desperate need in Russia was for men who would stand behind a movement against exploitation, against the tyrannies of the Tsar's regime, and yet who would preach the higher opportunity of non-violent coercion, who would emphasize the infinite worth of human personality even for the enemies of the Russian revolution.] It was just because there was such a tragically small number of such spiritual Christians that the Red and White Terrors were as drastic as they were.

Similarly, if the time ever comes in America when a revolution and violence are used, the crying need will be for men of good will who do not oppose group action for justice and brotherhood against exploitation, but who will to some degree mitigate the cruelties of the struggle. If a doctor knew how to prevent the necessity of an operation for appendicitis by curing the patient by medicine it would be foolish for him nevertheless to continue to operate on patients right and left simply because he could not persuade his colleagues to desist from operating. It would be much better for him to refuse to operate and to insist on the use of the higher technique. This would not mean that he would oppose his colleagues in their own

sincere efforts to cure disease. He would still strongly support their ministry of healing, while at the same time insisting that there was a higher and better way.

Similarly in our social body politic, if there are religious leaders who see the possibility of changing wrong, of eliminating exploitation through non-violent coercion, it is foolish for them, because they cannot win the majority, to succumb to the lower technique of violence, machine guns and bullets. If we look realistically on the American scene we will recognize that at present the use of violence by radical groups is impractical, dangerous, and defeating to the entire program of social revolution. If we look ahead to a future time when revolutionary violence actually breaks, realism will tell us that the necessity in that hour will be for men who will stand uncompromisingly for the highest technique of good will and justice, who will recognize the infinite worth of every human personality. These men will thus mitigate the cruelties and excesses of the strife, while nevertheless championing justice and a revolutionary reorganization of our social life.

The supreme necessity to-day is not to carry on theoretical discussions about the use of violence, although it may be necessary for thinking Christians carefully to weigh this issue. The danger is that discussion will be a substitute for action. At the moment we stand in danger of becoming so engrossed in theoretical questions of strategy in a distant future that we may fail to take action *now*. The crying need in America is to organize the working groups and organize them now, to refuse to remain quiescent in the face of exploitation, injustice and special privilege. Every Christian has an opportunity in his own community to take action for and on behalf of the underprivileged groups. It is an obligation of the highest order to try to see that the workers are organized into unions with leaders of their own choice, to help to educate them to a higher level of spiritual values. It is an obligation to see that the working class does exert a just controlling interest in the political life of the country. It is essential to see to it that the economic life is organized so that all the people receive the fruits of the production process in abundant measure and on an equal basis, that the masses of the people do control the natural resources which God has given so freely to us all. This is a program on which Christians should move and move now. If we must consider the question of violence, let us not accept the easy solution of yielding to the pressures of the popular majority

and engaging in violent "murder," whether it be international strife or internal conflict.

In conclusion, then, just what obligation rests on the Christian who is sincerely trying to avoid the twin devils of vengeance and hypocrisy—who refuses to remain smugly complacent in the face of a dying economic order? Among other tasks it seems to me are these:

- First, he must actually join with the exploited. He must make them sense that he is one of them.
- Second, he must actually throw himself on the side of the underprivileged workers and get into the struggle for the definite establishment of economic justice.
- Third, he must do away so far as he can with the conditions so prevalent in our society that are causing violence now.
- Fourth, he must help to break down special privilege wherever it exists.
- Fifth, his way of life must involve the personal renunciation of luxury and probably of most of the unnecessary comforts of the middle class.
- Sixth, he must help to increase the class consciousness of the workers. If the workers are class conscious it means that they are no longer working for individual achievement at the expense of their fellows. Therefore class consciousness among the workers may be an unselfish, spiritual attitude which must be cultivated. This necessitates the definite effort to develop and deepen the religious spirit among the workers.
- Seventh, he must help to socialize the churches and make them function more nearly as temples for the underprivileged.
- Finally, Christians must demonstrate in their lives the spirit of service and sacrifice for the cause of human welfare and world brotherhood so as to begin to build the eternal spiritual values of invincible good will here and now. This necessitates moral and spiritual resources in the individual which are being definitely sought after and conserved.

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COMMENT

The editor of *RELIGION IN LIFE* has asked me to comment briefly upon Jerome Davis' criticism of my social position in the foregoing article. Mr. Davis accuses me of having a vague position and I hardly know how to refute that charge since Mr. Davis quotes words of mine which seem to convey their meaning fairly clearly. I have insisted that it is impossible to make an absolute moral distinction between violent and non-violent coercion and that to do so gives an undue moral advantage to those classes in society who have the economic power to exert non-violent coercion.

Mr. Davis is not a non-resister, though he again and again identifies

"the way of the cross" with non-violent compulsion. There is nothing in the record to prove that Jesus would have engineered a strike any more than that he would have participated in a war. The effort to claim the authority of Jesus for a policy of non-violent compulsion seems to me to rest upon pure confusion. The ethic of Jesus cannot be had for any pragmatic social ethic. Mr. Davis, true to the old social gospel tradition, is still unaware of the very pragmatic character of every social policy which deals with the relativities of politics. Thus, for instance, he justifies coercion if it is "based upon the greatest good of the greatest number" and takes into account "the infinite worth of each human personality." Groups which are engaged in social conflict always claim that they are fighting for the greatest good. I know of no social group, economic, racial or national, which has not made the claim that it serves a good beyond its own good. Who shall arbitrate? "The infinite worth of each human personality" is violated in every type of social conflict and every type of social life in which human beings are claimed for social ends which violate their freedom. The infinite worth of personality has a religio-moral meaning but it is completely bereft of a socio-moral significance. Would Mr. Davis be able to explain how the strikes which he advocates and which may bring much suffering to the children of the strikers are compatible with the infinite worth of the personalities of these children?

The insistence upon this principle of the infinite worth of each personality as a criterion of virtue in social conduct results from the effort of the social gospel school of ethics to draw principles of social politics from an absolute religious ethic. Something of the same confusion is seen in Mr. Davis' remark that "to say that people may starve because of strikes means little." He proceeds to prove that it means little by declaring that "Jesus' way of life caused his death upon the cross but he did not deliberately crush out the lives of others." I am completely unable to comprehend the relevance of the one statement to the other except upon the assumption that Mr. Davis erroneously identifies a completely self-sacrificing act with a policy of social compulsion which may have the death of participants as the inevitable but not the intended consequence.

The most interesting part of Mr. Davis' thesis is that after he bravely inveighs against my theory he arrives at my conclusions. He declares that just because there are so few Christians likely to go the way of the cross "it is likely that violence will be used." If both sides should use violence

"violence is not the crucial issue." The crucial issue then becomes "which side has more of justice." On that basis Mr. Davis counsels Christians to choose the side of the worker. The Christian must not even "condemn and oppose the side which stands for social justice because it does not comprehend the highest technique of non-violent coercion." Mr. Davis would in other words support the underprivileged in a possible ultimate conflict and not separate himself from them. So far we agree. Only Mr. Davis would, because he had "sensed the possibilities of love and good will in action," "refuse to participate in the use of machine guns and bullets."

The real point of difference between Mr. Davis and myself, as far as practical politics is concerned, is that Mr. Davis, involved in a social struggle, would declare that the principle of love which he holds would make it impossible for him to use a machine gun. If he wants to draw the line at that particular point, very well. I might draw it there myself. But I would not think of declaring that my refusal to use a machine gun in an ultimate conflict was a complete revelation of my adherence to the gospel of love. Social conflict involves hatred long before it involves violence. Mr. Davis would make the workers "class conscious." Can he imagine class consciousness without vindictive passions against the class against which the workers' class sets itself? If he cannot participate in violence what right has he to participate in a process which involves hatred and vengeance? I believe a Christian must recognize the sin of both hatred and violence and try to free himself of these sins. But he cannot insist that the presence of these sins in a social movement makes it impossible for him to participate in it. He can do that only if he is willing to flee into the monastery.

A true Christian seems to me to have only two possibilities. The one is asceticism; which I reject because in it the good man becomes a parasite on the sinful world. The other is to participate as best he may in the relative programs of politics for the achievement of a relative justice. But this participation will always be qualified by the realization that in every social conflict there are demonic forces on both sides and that the choice is one between evils as well as between goods. But the Christian ought to arrive at that conviction long before the machine guns are brought out. And he will have to prove his allegiance to the gospel of love by something more than the refusal to man a gun.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR.

The Function of Criticism in Literature

CARL ECKHARDT GRAMMER

IN recent years there has been much discussion of the function of criticism. Indeed, the question has been raised as to whether criticism has any real value; whether there are any immutable principles underlying judgments of artistic productions. It cannot be denied that official criticism has tended to over-legislation, and has often failed, as in the reception given to Wordsworth, Blake and Keats, to recognize genius. The futility of rigid rules has indeed been proven.

But because false critics have built domes of glass between the heavens and themselves, which genius had to shatter to disclose new stars and constellations, does it follow that there are no principles of literary composition, and that all literary criticism is an impertinence?

Much has been made of Disraeli's opinion: "You know what the critics are? The men who have failed in literature and art." Shelley put it even more pungently: "As a bankrupt thief turns thief-taker in despair, so an unsuccessful author turns critic." But these expressions of chagrin should not be taken seriously. Disraeli showed in *Endymion* that he never forgave Thackeray's mordant ridicule of his novels. Criticism did not show itself at its best in its attitude toward Shelley. There are critics and critics. Not all critics are like Miss Debórah Jenkins in *Cranford* (she always pronounced it Debórah, you will recall), who, after Captain Brown's reading aloud of Dickens, called for a volume of Doctor Johnson, that the company might hear the truly good English of his pompous sentences. The critics who refused to admire Ossian's fustian rhetoric, Bailey's popular *Festus*, Robert Montgomery's poems, or Marie Corelli's novels, proved to be right—if the verdict of time has any value. Judicious critics have often proven helpful guides. The greatest critics have been anything but failures. No one associates failure with Aristotle and Longinus among the Greeks; with Horace and Quintilian among the Romans; with Lessing and Goethe, Sainte Beuve and Taine, among the moderns; not to speak of the English poets who were also eminent critics—Dryden and Pope, Coleridge and Matthew Arnold.

The disparagement of criticism is a result of the Romantic revolt

against neo-classicism, which led to strange delusions as well as to fruitful discoveries. It was a great gain to get rid of the cramping rules and artificial standards that were preventing the growth of literature, and rendering it unable to portray life. It was well to deprive tradition of its despotic power: but it should not have been treated with scorn; it should have been retained as a guide, philosopher and friend.

Because some conventions are cramping, it does not follow that all conventions are useless encumbrances, as Voltaire wittily indicated when he wrote Rousseau, that after reading his praises of man in his primitive condition, he had been tempted to romp about the room on all fours. The Romantic delusion that primitive man was "a box where sweets compacted lie" led logically to the conclusion that the taste of primitive and uncultured people is the best. Rousseau was a supreme rhetorician, and marvelous is the power of rhetoric. No wonder that politicians put their trust in it. Rightly does Lowell make the politician say:

This heth my faithful shepherd ben,
In pastures sweet heth led me,
An' this 'll keep the people green
To feed ez they hev fed me.

Any sailor who had put in at a port in Africa, any traveler from the wilds of America could have told the Romanticist of the ferocity and brutishness of savages. John Wesley went to Georgia with such notions, but soon discovered their falsity.

Romanticism, however, did not care for facts. Disgusted with the stifling etiquette of the artificial society of France, where feudal distinctions and privileges lingered on after feudal tasks and responsibilities had disappeared, tired of the monotony of the stage with its cramping unities, and of the rigidity of Boileau and the Jesuit scholars, the genius of France was resolved to gain a larger liberty. Revolt raised its head in every field. Excessive emphasis on form had produced its invariable fruit of hypocrisy, both in religion and in taste. Undoubtedly the reaction was needed, was in many ways most helpful.

But just as undoubtedly, it went too far. The dominant characteristic was the exaltation of emotion. This side of our nature should of course receive due recognition, and had been too much confined. Feelings, emotions, instincts, have important rôles in literature. But they must be supervised and controlled by reason and will, if man is to retain his proper

dignity as a reasonable being. Literature cannot be ranked among the fine arts if its sole criterion of judgment was expressed by Lincoln in his famous comment on a trashy novel: "Those who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like." Jefferson was under the influence of Rousseau, just when he thought himself most independent, when he wrote to William Wirt:

"I have always very much despised the artificial canons of criticism. When I have read a work in prose or poetry, or seen a painting or statue, etc., I have only asked myself whether it gives me pleasure, whether it is animating, interesting, attaching. If it is, it is good for those reasons."

Our personal tastes are surely capable of improvement and refinement, of correction and cultivation. When Jefferson wrote that letter in 1816, he was a much traveled and widely read man—perhaps the most cultivated man in America. Would he have recommended callow youths seeking culture and equipment, to direct their reading entirely by their individual taste? Are there no authors of such proven excellence that they can serve as standards and guides for the training of the next generation, or as aids to talent? Education is badly off without standards as tools.

In truth, Jefferson's dictum must be regarded not as reasoned judgment, but as an emotional reaction against dogmatism and hypocrisy. These pests abound in literature, as well as in religion, and they are particularly annoying to people gifted with insight and dislike of humbug. We do not, however, reject all coins because counterfeits are in circulation; we discriminate. Much literary criticism is a mindless echo; thousands praise Milton who never willingly read a page of his poetry. Many dogmatic literary opinions only reveal limitations of the critic, as, for example, Doctor Johnson's declaration that *King Lear* should have ended happily—as if, after such agonies, peace could have been found anywhere but in the grave. Kent gave the right verdict:

. . . "He hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer."

It was all to the good that such arrogant dogmatism on the part of critics should be treated with scorn, and that Romanticism should win for literature a new freedom, should reject those cramping unities of the drama, should delineate new types of character, find new themes, invent new

forms, and discover in the beauty of scenery a source of exquisite emotion.

It was, however, a great misfortune that critics themselves yielded so unreservedly to the new spirit, and abandoned so much of their proper function. In Lalla Rookh, Fadladeen, the courtier, who escorted to her marriage the bride of the young King of Bucharía, criticized with merciless severity the poetry of the poet Feramorz, who accompanied the bridal party on the long journey, and entertained the princess by his verse. When it was disclosed at the wedding that Feramorz was the King himself, seeking in disguise to win the affections of his bride, Fadladeen, practiced courtier that he was, did not take long to execute a complete about-face, and praise to the skies the poetry he had derided, and to threaten with the chabuk anyone who failed to appreciate it.

Unfortunately, when Romanticism became dominant, the critics capitulated in much the same way. The traditions of the past were not only deprived of their absolute authority, they were treated with scorn. Criticism ceased to be intellectual, and simply registered emotional responses. Appreciation was the vogue. The one criterion was popular success.

The theory had been that criticism was essentially an aristocratic function, that the jurors who rendered its verdicts must be people of taste and culture, Voltaire's elect. Romanticism inclined to regard such exaltation of taste as disloyalty to democracy and instinct. The mistakes of the critics in the past were emphasized, and their contributions were practically ignored. With Tolstoi leading the procession, sentimental critics have applied the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity to books and writers.

The loudest bagpipe in this squeaking train is played to-day by Mencken, or perhaps I should say, the leading dancer in this carmagnole. According to this vivacious writer, all criticism is bunk. The critic is merely advertising himself, and displaying his own gifts. There are no rules; whatever "animates, interests, attaches" justifies itself. Everyone wins the prize, who captures attention and applause. So-called "standards" are only hypocrisies or superstitions. The opinions of the crowd and of the day are put on the same level with the verdict of many generations, and of the experts and uniquely gifted.

Such disregard of quality must degrade the arts. According to this theory it makes no difference whether a dancer gains applause by her grace or by her nakedness, whether the historian holds your interest by his

artistically molded substance, crammed with thought, or by his resounding verbosity and purple patches of rhetoric.

If quality is ignored, there can be no standard. If there are no standards, there can be no rules; if there are no laws, there can be no government, and the result is anarchy in literature. The result is further-reaching than mere form; it extends to and modifies the very substance of literature.

When rules are resented as tyrannical, morality is bound to be disliked. It cannot be denied that morality has an important bearing on life. Even if it be regarded as a delusion, it is a delusion that has power. But as a rule the tendency of the literature of revolt is to ignore it. If it appears at all, it must be as a harsh tyrant ruling over imbruted and hardened natures. Never must painful duty be portrayed as bringing by its performance nobility and that happiness of which Wordsworth wrote in his *Ode to Duty*:

"Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face."

Nothing is more derided by these anarchical critics in a work of imagination than moral force. But the usual procedure is to disregard morality entirely. The theory is that it is not a subject for art, since Art exists for Art's sake. Imagination must create a world of its own. The artist is no more called upon to consider the claims of morals than the spectator in the theater is called upon to rescue Desdemona. It is as absurd to demand morality of literature as it would be to require morality of a triangle. All we ask of a triangle is that it have the essential shape, and all that we require of literature is that it give pleasure, and be animating, interesting, and attaching. Since these are the sole canons of criticism, all that the critic should consider is the thrills. The ancient critics thought some thrills nobler than others, and more difficult to evoke, more enduring and more elevating. But if all criticism is bunk, hypocrisy and superstition, then the animalists have the right of way. It is true that Shelley's great poetic gifts could not make *The Cenci* a success with its theme of incest, but that was the stupidity of an unenlightened age. Zola and the sex-novelists understand their business. Moreover, if the poisoned wine of unnatural lust has unique power of intoxication, the novelist should pour out this beverage. Consequences are no concern of his. Only stupid Puritans who, as everyone knows, are

responsible for most of the evils of our civilization, object, and they don't count.

We have in all this nothing very novel: only another illustration of the close relation between literature and life—of the process whereby philosophy can prostitute itself to condoning whatever is popular and acting under some circumstances as procuress for the Lords of Hell.

As the changes under the Tudor sovereigns in the religion of England at the Reformation—that Reformation itself the result of changes in thought—reacted upon thought and produced the philosophy of Hobbes and his theory that it is the duty of subjects to adopt the religion of their sovereign, so the French Revolution, one of whose causes was Romantic literature, reacted upon literature and has eventually driven it to literary excesses that rival the madness of the Jacobites—morality and religion taking the place of the aristocrats.

In truth, by rejecting standards, criticism commits suicide. There can be no weighing if all the scales are destroyed. Criticism is an act of judgment, and implies comparison and evaluation. It is out of place where values are all equal. If qualitative analysis is rejected, the only tests will be quantitative, either quantity of sales or of applause. True criticism will cease. Art for Art's sake is the cry if morals or religion are referred to. Yet in their discussions of literature these critics carefully avoid the subject of art and treat the material as historical or psychological documents. This is indeed inevitable under the circumstances.

Surely Babbitt and Woodbury and their allies are right in proclaiming that the great need of the day is to put an end to this anarchy, to give the great traditions of the past their rightful authority, and awaken critics to their proper function of discriminating, evaluating, and making known the best that has been achieved. We do not wish the old tyranny restored. We do not want the Bourbons brought back. But we do want a literature that is regulated by the canons of reason, morality, and good taste, that conscience of the mind.

We want to enjoy the benefit of our heritage from the classic past, especially our heritage from Greece, where the proper limitations of the several Arts were appreciated, as Lessing showed in the Laocoon, where the great rules of measure and proportion were observed, and the supreme requirement was *Μηδὲν ἄγαν*. Gargoyles are all right in their places, but that place is outside of sacred fanes. Not even the genius of a Dickens or a

Victor Hugo can reconcile us to such monstrosities as Quilp or the Hunchback of Notre Dame. To be great, Art must exhibit measure and proportion. Shakespeare understood its true canons, and laid them down for all time in Hamlet's advice to the Players:

"In the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to the very tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings. . . . All must be done with this special observance that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for everything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 't were the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own features, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure. This overdone and come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which must o'erweigh a whole theatre of others." What golden words! Every shot hits the bull's eye. The aristocratic nature and judicial function of criticism fully recognized.

For artificial canons Shakespeare had no use; he pays no regard to the Aristotelian unities: Lear roams all over England, Othello begins in Venice and ends in Cyprus, The Winter's Tale overleaps years. But he knew instinctively the laws of human nature. An illustration is afforded by the comic scene of the grave-diggers in Hamlet and by the drunken castle porter in Macbeth. Every speaker appreciates how, after a point has been fully developed and brought to its most fervid expression, a change of tone, and a release of the tension is necessary as a preparation for the next climax. The necessity is psychological. So, in preparation for the tragic ending of Hamlet and for the tremendous murder scene in Macbeth, there had to be a release from the strained attention created by the earlier scenes. Not only did Shakespeare hold the mirror up to nature, but he held it at the proper inclination for the observer.

When the modernists of literature claim that they will improve on present-day usages, as Shakespeare improved on the tradition of his day, our reply is: To do this you must return to nature in Shakespeare's sense when he spoke of the modesty of nature. Modern critics are fond of proclaiming that nature is not modest at all, but raw and crude. They hold that people who have red blood in their veins like to taste this rawness.

They quote Renan's dictum that nature knows nothing of chastity. But they need to distinguish. Renan was right if nature is identified with things, and if by nature is meant animal nature. But there is another nature, higher than the nature that resides in things and animals, the nature that resides in persons, in man. Civilization is in this higher sense a natural product.

The classical expression of this is the famous passage in the *Winter's Tale*:

"Nature is made better by no mean
 But Nature makes that mean. So, over
 The art you say adds to Nature, is an art
 That Nature makes. . . .
 This is an art
 Which does mend Nature, change it rather, but
 The Art itself is Nature."

The nature that knows nothing of chastity is nature in the lower sense. "The modesty of nature" that Hamlet commended is nature in the higher sense, in the sense in which nature gives us art, morality and religion.

Literature is entitled to variety, richness, flexibility, but it is well to bear in mind that it cannot possess elevation or refinement unless it respects this modesty of our higher nature, unless it realizes, as Emerson puts it,

There are two laws discrete,
 Unreconciled:
 Law for man, and law for thing.
 The last builds town and fleet,
 But it runs wild,
 And doth the man un-king.

Moreover, criticism must appreciate that literature is an art, and that Art requires selection. An unselective report of life can no more produce literature than stone unchiseled can produce a statue, than letters spilled on the floor can make a sonnet. A work of art to be vital must be instinct with purpose in every part. Literature can no more be composed by gathering together promiscuous details, after the fashion of Walt Whitman at his worst, than a perfume can be compounded by raking up filth. You can get a great stench in that way, but we refuse to accept it as a perfume, even if some people who have lost their sense of smell like its pungency, or if other people, for personal reasons, are gratified by it, as the old courtiers, return-

ing to the Tuileries, used to snuff with rapture the foetid smells of the old palace. In such matters normal people lay down the law. The exaltation of normality and sanity is central in the great tradition of literature. The principles it reveres are the principles that were exemplified by the world's great writers, who have received the homage of their fellow-artists, and of judicious readers—the opinions of groundlings capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb show and noise being ignored.

The safe-guarding, transmitting and improving, if possible, that great tradition, is just now, it seems to me, the supreme function of criticism, especially when I recall the kind of literature that many of our college professors require their students to read. The discovery of the laws of relativity has caused absolute standards to be challenged and distrusted in every field. Little attention is paid to the obligation of selecting among these relativities the one that most closely interprets reality, or most effectively manages it. All the old limits, tested by experience, and vindicated many times by reason, are resented. Cubist painting seeks to overleap the limitations of painting and vie with sculpture. Free verse will disregard meter and rhyme and all previous forms of poetry, and yet not become prose, queerly printed. Impressionistic literature helps to produce the higher temperature, in which the tropical growths of passion flourish. It is unnecessary to point out the injury done to youth.

It is the task of the critics to help literature back into the temperate zone, where civilization and art have ever chiefly flourished.

Criticism must insist that the glory of man is found in his reason, conscience, and will and not in those emotions which he shares with brute beasts. Christianity has influenced the world too profoundly to permit a return to the sensuality of the mosaics of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Our Christianized instincts turn away from the animal side of love. Not in vain have the ascetics, the troubadours lived; not in vain have chivalry and poetry exalted chastity.

We call upon literature to show us men and women when they are most fully human, most human and most divine. Show us man as he is, under the laws peculiar to his own nature, and not under the domination of animal passion. Critics should learn a lesson from Elsie Ferguson in "The Outcast." In that play a young man of wealth renders a kindness to a street-walker, standing out in the rain below his window, and is so charmed by her pretty gratitude that he makes her his mistress, with the express stipula-

tion, unreservedly accepted by the girl, that there is to be no obligation to continue the relation should either party wish it to cease; neither would mind. Nothing could have been more definite, and nothing more unworkable. You can nail boards together, and time will make no change in the bond, unless perhaps the nails rust and the tie is weakened. But life can't be treated in that fashion. Saplings tied together are liable to grow together. Hearts throw out even stronger filaments. The couple in "The Outcast" found, when the man decided to terminate the relation, that it was not the simple matter they had anticipated. The result was tragic. Affections, loyalties, gratitude, appreciations, reciprocal claims, will grow up between human beings. Life is not human without these instincts,

"Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet the master light of all our seeing."

Morals can be left out in drawing a triangle, because a triangle is a mere figure, and has not a moral nature, but morals cannot be left out of man, if literature is to depict man as he is.

The same holds good of religion—a side of man's nature carefully neglected in modern literature. The great Greek writers did not draw people and omit their religion. In the name of religion Antigone defied the decree of Creon, that her brother should have no funeral rites. In obedience to religion Agamemnon offered up Iphigenia. Greek poetry is so filled with religion that Plato, who regarded the ancient religion as harmful superstition, would banish the poets from his ideal republic. Shakespeare was predominantly a product of the Renaissance, which forgot the Giver in the given, a Humanist, but he was too profoundly acquainted with human nature to ignore our religious instincts. The fear of the Almighty's decree against self-slaughter keeps Hamlet from suicide. "I stand in the great hand of God," exclaims Banquo, encompassed by perils. Portia commends mercy as an attribute of God himself. Henry V, the ideal hero-king, the night before Agincourt, beseeches God to forgive his father's usurpation, "think not of the fault my father made in compassing the crown." Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, are all great moral forces, not as preachers, but as artists. With such a great tradition to preserve, critics of literature should call upon our writers to stop truncating mankind by ignoring his higher faculties, his noblest aspirations and yearn-

ings, and dwelling predominantly, and in the case of some writers exclusively, upon his lusts, appetites and fears, upon the earthly, sensual, devilish side of his composite nature.

It was well to turn away from an art that was artificial, and study nature unconventionalized and free. But surely it is now time to turn from nature in its lower aspect and consider that higher nature with its richer and nobler endowments.

The great standards will no more check growth than the grafting of a cultivated stock upon a wilding will ruin fruit. Those standards are capable of expansion and improvement. In some cases they must be rejected, but they must be rejected as scaffolding is cast aside, because they have been used. Their spirit, if I may change the figure, must be absorbed.

In the exaltation of this supreme function of the critics, I would not imply that they have not other useful offices. Only a few have the creative gifts, and only a few have supreme critical gifts. There are, however, other useful services which critics and scholars can render to creative genius. One of the most helpful is the function of the interpretative critic, which has been aptly compared to the function of a catalyzer in chemistry. Merely dissolve sugar in water, and nothing happens. Add a few drops of acid, and the sugar changes into glucose, the acid remaining entirely unaffected. It has done its work in getting a reaction. This is called catalysis: the acid is a catalyzer. It is one of the finest functions of a critic to bring about the proper reaction between the reader and a masterpiece, to introduce them to one another.

So Goethe introduces us to Hamlet, when he compares him to a flower-pot in which an acorn has been planted—too narrow and fragile a container for the powerful plant that finally shatters it. So Doctor Johnson tears off the courtier's garments from Polonius, and shows us the man beneath. So Ruskin takes lines in Milton's *Lycidas*, and discloses the full meaning of calling the bishops of England "blind mouths"—men whose duty it was to see, overseers, who were "blind"; shepherds who should provide for the flock, but devoured it instead—"mouths," "blind mouths." What a port-manteau of reproaches! So great preachers often reveal the depth and meaning of the words of the Master to our mole-like eyes.

Nor is this all. The artist must show the form and pressure of the time, and cannot be fully understood unless we know something of his age. Not even the Hermes of Praxiteles could be fully appreciated unless the

spectator knew something of Greek mythology. Many keys in literature's instrument will fail to sound for the reader unless he knows something of the contemporary life. Here the scholar can be of great aid—always providing that his antiquarian interest does not make the restored notes too loud. For indeed, there are many cases where the silencing of these notes has really elevated the music to greater grandeur.

I cannot agree with those who think that there is no interest in knowing something of writers. Lowell has some extravagant remarks about our indifference to any knowledge of the character and private life of Shakespeare. We know a great deal of Dante and Milton, and undoubtedly their poems gain in power by our knowledge that the authors were great men, as well as great artists. Critics like Sainte Beuve add a new interest to literature by tracing the connection between an author's disposition and experience and his writings.

Critics have not always failed to recognize genius. Often they are the first to acclaim it. So De Quincey early recognized the Lake School. Dickens recognized Tennyson, and Stevenson praised Meredith. This is one of their most useful functions.

Nor can I pass over the valuable services of critics like Taine. A work of art takes its place in a historic series. It is not only a joy forever; it is an event in time. It comes under the law of development. It is instructive and interesting to note how the past prepared the way for it, how it reacted to the past, and how it paved the way for subsequent progress.

There is room for all these types of criticism—interpretative, historical, psychological, social. All are needed. Some, indeed, belong as much to history, psychology, or biography, as to literary criticism. All are useful. The supreme function, however, is exercised by the critics, who, valuing literature as a great art, seek to keep it in line with its best traditions. That tradition, rightly understood, does not preclude growth. It is not so much a matter of form as of spirit. It is a mode of thinking and feeling that will be a helpful guide into new fields, in the same way that the seamanship of the mariner enables him to find his way in new seas.

Never did the world need more in every sphere, in morals and religion, in statesmanship and economics, as well as in literature, the ability to discriminate, and to rediscover the enduring principles that have helped us in every department on the upward road. In literature this seems to be undoubtedly the chief function of criticism.

Gardening for Experience

J. FREDERIC BERG

A VERY extensive literature might be listed bearing on the subject: "Gardening for Profit." An equally long catalogue of books, now including magazines, might be collated treating the subject: "Gardening for Pleasure." In spite of these wise and always well-meaning advisers, the gardener for profit may report a total loss and the gardener for pleasure have little to show for his efforts but tan and calloused hands. Whether or not profit or pleasure reward the gardener's efforts this much at least is certain, that by the time the gardening season is ended, each will have gained a modicum of definite information. But on this subject of "Gardening for Experience," little if any literature is to be found.

No word in our vocabulary is so invested with intriguing charm as the word "garden." Even those whose environment is largely composed of brick and concrete may be really gardeners at heart and as they go about their perfunctory tasks their imaginations are transporting them to a garden where in most glorious profusion all their favorite flowers grow. In reality they may have only a flower pot containing a bloomless plant of questionable character standing on the fire-escape, or a few sunloving plants drooping anæmic leaves in the shady side of the back yard. In imagination it is quite different. There every plant blooms indifferent to season or weather conditions. Any color scheme can be nicely arranged. While the florist laments the scarcity of blue in July and August, the garden of the imagination is liberally supplied with that color, for if July and August are niggardly in its production it simply levies on May and June. The "ever blooming rose" so widely advertised may in practice prove to have hung its reputation on a few isolated blooms not too prodigally scattered through the summer. In the garden of the imagination all rose bushes are a mass of bloom until time of frost, which is complacently kept below the horizon. In a certain college town it is a familiar saying that if one should stand on any busy street corner and shout "Doctor" a dozen men would stop and turn their heads; if anyone should stand on a busy street corner and cry: "O thou that dwellest in gardens," a score of people would

stop inquiringly before the garden of the imagination had had time to fade.

The ancient author of those early Genesis stories knew human nature when he described humanity's original setting as a "garden." That first garden was intended to be a school, a co-educational school, in which man and woman should together practice gardening for experience. One day a stranger entered the school. He was clothed in scaly armor and said he was a prince in exile. According to his account he had been sovereign of a kingdom in the skies, but another king, jealous of his intellectual acumen, had made war upon him, defeated him and cast him to earth where he was now walking to and fro, going up and down seeking a site on which to found a new kingdom. Eve found him very interesting and attractive. Adam said the story sounded fishy and the fellow reminded him of a snake. One day Eve and the prince were strolling around the garden, Adam sulking by himself, when the prince casually inquired: "Are you not permitted to eat of every tree of the garden?" Now that the fact of the interdict upon the tree in the midst of the garden was recalled it did seem a hardship. The exiled prince chuckled and humorously pointed out that here was the same jealousy of rivalry that had cost him his kingdom of the skies for "God knows that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be as gods." After the prince had gone Eve reflected that here was an easy way to get to the head of the class, she would eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Adam determined that Eve should take no such unfair advantage of him "and he did eat." Both scholars were caught cribbing and expelled from the school. So ended the first chapter in the story of "Gardening for Experience."

Ever since that day man has been gardening, sometimes for profit, more rarely for pleasure, but whichever he was doing he was quite unconsciously gardening for experience. In these days of increasing emphasis upon the country home, gardening has become a very popular hobby. All through the rural districts garden clubs are springing up, giving large incentive to horticultural effort. Of course if the garden is kept by an expert gardener the profits are probably nil and the pleasure greatly decreased. To get the most profit and pleasure out of a garden the owner must do the work himself. This will vary in respect to toil all the way from forking over a compost heap to sitting on a bench and getting such pleasure out of the prospect as the mosquitoes will permit. At no time is

any attitude toward the garden a position of unalloyed comfort or of undisturbed pleasure.

In view of the fact that the garden has taken such hold on the imagination and that it so constantly recurs in portions of the Scriptures as symbolizing the most fruitful of human activities, it is rather surprising that the garden suggested to Jesus no suitable theme for a parable. If, as Genesis suggests, mankind is a "garden escape," a once carefully nurtured plant that has run wild, like our Purple Loosestrife and Bouncing Bet, then it would seem as though salvation might be no more vividly portrayed than as the reclamation of a cherished plant. Such garden metaphors as the Scriptures contain, however, are limited to the Old Testament; the favorite metaphors of the New Testament are pastoral, mercantile, military and political. True, Mary turned to address the risen Christ "supposing him to be the gardener" but the sequel shows she was mistaken. There stood the man who had claimed to be "The good Shepherd"; who had once insisted he must "be about his Father's business"; the "Captain of our salvation" who was made "perfect through suffering"; the man who asserted to Pilate that he was "a king," but not a man who had ever said: "I am the Head Gardener."

Notwithstanding this New Testament reticence in respect to the pedagogical values of the garden, the Christian Church has yet made much of the fact that "in the place where they crucified him there was a garden" and Gethsemane has become the symbol of all great emotional experience. After all, it is enough that Jesus has pointed out in his parables what prolific material for religious and moral instruction is to be found in the ordinary experiences and occurrences of life. To discern the higher values which underlie the commonplace is to redeem it from triviality and often to include the ordinary and hum-drum in courses of higher education. Conceding that this is true no apology need be offered by one who engages in gardening for experience.

That any one, warmed by the breath of spring, plans his horticultural labors with an eye on their symbolic, ethical teaching it is absurd to think. The textbook of the garden is not the Bible but the seed catalogue. What lessons may be learned and what experience will be gained are not within the gardener's view, if wisdom, rather than fruit and flowers, is the main harvest. Such at any rate was not the intention of his soul; wisdom is usually a by-product and not a deliberate goal.

It will be generally conceded by all amateur gardeners that the arrival of the seed catalogue, somewhere around mid-winter, is the actual beginning of the season's horticultural industry. When this exhilarating moment arrives nature has been bleak for several months. The most ingenious contributor to the garden magazine can suggest no out-door employment indispensable to the garden's welfare. So it is that unless the amateur has entered upon the doubtful venture of a "cold frame" or is able to enjoy the luxury of a greenhouse or is trying to raise mushrooms in his cellar, the gardening instinct must find employment in poring over catalogues and making lists of desirable seeds and plants the total cost of which will probably necessitate several drastic revisions both of quantity and variety before the final selection is made.

It requires quite exhaustive study to master the catalogue, for even the outside cover will probably be a work of art deserving of more than a hasty glance while its contents, comprising the garden's destiny, will require uninterrupted attention. What miracles of horticultural achievement will be illustrated on every page! Flowers without a blemish and fruit without a flaw. While the weather man is announcing: "Storm followed by clearing," or "Continued cold followed by rising temperature," the catalogue speaks only of south winds blowing upon the garden that "the spices thereof may flow out." Moses describes Joseph as "a fruitful vine whose branches run over the wall." The catalogue will contain many pictures of Joseph in each one of which he will look just as Moses says.

The scope of the catalogue is stated in one modest sentence: "Everything for the garden." The hastiest glance reveals that this is no idle boast, for the greediest garden could ask no more. Here are portrayed the elementary germs of garden prodigies, the tools with which to perform every conceivable operation (a collection that makes the dentist's trays seem sparsely appointed), fertilizers in sufficient variety to satisfy the appetite of the most fastidious plant. Special attention will be called to the apparatus wherewith to make gas attacks upon all insect enemies. There will even be special stakes to uphold floral monsters and, finest of all, a wheelbarrow whose graceful lines and artistic finish camouflage the base uses to which it will be applied. It is all very exciting and inspiring but after the first cursory inspection a more deliberate and critical examination of the catalogue discloses certain practical ideas. A doubt intrudes itself as to whether such truly glorious triumphs can actually be achieved.

Memory goes back to former years when hopes aroused by similar catalogues were not fulfilled. Seasons will be recalled when with Paul the gardener could say: "I have fought a good fight," but when, also like the apostle, he would be unable to claim that he had been victorious in any battle. It has been discovered that seeds do not always run true to form and that colors in no way agree with those from which the catalogue artist took his models. Of course it will instantly be conceded, for hope dies hard, that no mere imagination would have sufficed for these illustrations, which must certainly have been copied from living specimens, and yet they are portraits of nothing that ever grew in the amateur's garden. Furthermore it will be recalled that there are many elements essential to success which the catalogue can point out but which it cannot ensure. Thus the soil may have been too sandy or too heavy; the litmus paper, used according to direction to test for sourness, may not have been of the specified high grade; according to all authorities the smallest plant will not thrive in ground that has not been spaded to a depth of four feet, that is, to about the level of the average cellar floor. By all feminine writers on the subject of gardening this stirring of the earth to the depth of four feet is called "spading," though in reality before the operation is finished there will be required a pick-ax, a crow-bar and several sticks of dynamite. In this bed, four feet deep, the seed must be planted at a depth "three times its diameter." Clearly, loss of the entire crop may result from error in determining the seed's diameter, but since success depends upon so many factors which it is not within the province of the catalogue to supply, failure is easily explicable without impugning the quality or productiveness of the seed.

But while failure and industry may for obvious reasons go hand in hand, it is still possible that failure may not be as actual as supposed. It all depends on what meaning is given to the word "success." To one who would make his every occupation square with the highest religious ideals, it is rather disconcerting to discover that the word "success" does not anywhere occur in the Bible. Signifying to us, as it does, the crown of all activity, it has become a word with which to conjure in every department of life. Dictionaries define success in terms of achievement or prosperity and having such definitions in mind the gardener is probably justified in frequently regarding his work as failure. Success, however, is too often viewed in a merely objective way. Seeing others attain positions and

emoluments which we covet for ourselves we grudgingly concede their success without any consideration of the price which may have been paid. The so-called "successful man" himself may be more conscious of what he has lost than of what he has won, for in reaching the much coveted goal he may have sacrificed much that was worth retaining, like a man who has caught the trolley car for which he has run, but on the way has lost his hat. The problem of the successful man usually is, shall he make the most of his achievement or go back for his hat?

A better definition than that offered by the lexicon is: The attainment of a worthy goal in an interesting way. If such a definition is tested it will be found impossible to conceive of a worthy goal apart from ethical standards. Thus, for example, it may be claimed that much of work is trivial but justified by the fact that it keeps the workman alive. The ethical principle decides the matter rather brutally by remarking that the trivial work is a worthy goal only when the workman is worth keeping alive. Is the operation that saves the life of an injured criminal a success? Society may answer one way and the medical profession another way. Or again, a man makes his goal the accumulation of wealth, he amasses his millions and at the same time is fascinated by the process. Has he not reached a worthy goal in an interesting way, quite ignoring any ethical considerations? Well, money, so the economist tells us, is a medium of exchange; it is not therefore an end in itself and cannot be described as a "goal." Before we can pronounce the satisfied millionaire a successful man we must know for what he is exchanging his wealth, or may it be that he has not had time to exchange it for anything, his soul having been required sooner than he expected?

Conversely, the gardener, deploring his failures, may be a huge success, his elegy resulting from the fact that he has momentarily lost sight of the actual goal. This is not at all simply to realize the catalogue's ideals but to secure healthy and pleasurable employment in the open air. Recalcitrant plants notwithstanding, this goal he has reached. Though he cherished an ideal of which he fell far short, he did well that it was in his heart. "Few and evil have been the days of my life," sighed the ancient Jacob, otherwise known as "the prince who had power with God." "Nothing but leaves," is the gardener's summary, so true it is that "Paul plants and Apollos waters" and neither holds the secret of increase. Pupil and teacher hold many a session together in which the teacher is the only gainer.

"The harvest is passed, the summer is ended," garden and gardener have had many happy hours together but perhaps the real success is the gardener.

Since gardening for experience invites so many conditions which may justly be termed adverse, it is reassuring to find that like the catalogue the book of nature takes as its slogan "Everything for the garden." This is something more than a cheerful motto, it is the consistent principle of nature's activity. In some way or other all the happenings of the physical world seem to have the garden specially in view. The sun in the sky, the wind-driven rain cloud, the earth so tilted on its axis as to produce "Seed-time and harvest, summer and winter," the frosts that break the clods, the droughts that advertise for human co-operation in pulverizing the soil! All to the end that this world may be made a livable place inviting and rewarding industry; in fact, a garden. If the Scriptures represent mankind as cradled in a garden, no less do they visualize his ultimate destiny as a garden watered by a river of life whose banks are shaded by trees of life of which our familiar arbor-vitæ is doubtless but a feeble shadow. Between the garden of ancient legend and that of wistful vision lies the whole story of mankind. Our long struggles and occasional victories interspersed with humiliating defeats compose a record which is strange reading. The journey between these two terminal gardens has been long and difficult. There are those who sneer at the garden *a quo* just as they ridicule the picture of the garden *ad quem* and yet each stands for more than a pious fancy, since life's disciplines, no less than its achievements, cannot better be described than as the "dressing and keeping," which has often degenerated into the undressing and neglecting, of a garden. In the matter of living we are all amateurs. With the highest anticipations youth prepares the list of contemplated achievements which are speedily revised in view of the high cost of living well. Reality is so different from the pictures of the imagination and so many difficulties not mentioned by success propagandists hurl belligerent challenge at the timid soul. Weeds are expected but not in the quantity in which they are apt to appear. It is here some consolation to reflect that ground which will not grow weeds will not produce anything. Characters inclined to no evil are equally incapable of any good. If it requires great self-control to become a saint, no less does it call for considerable nerve to be a sinner. A weed is a plant which no one deliberately cultivates because its virtues are unguessed, and much of the evil at which society not unreasonably shudders, if traced to its origin,

might be found to be a valuable power that has escaped from the garden and run wild—a sort of “Jeshuram” who “has waxed fat and kicked.” To reduce license to liberty is no easy task, we greatly prefer extermination; cultivation, however, may be worth the effort it costs. The wild but hardy power may have both useful and enduring qualities which in the end will enable it to supersede the fragile though aristocratic virtue that shrivels in the sun, grows anæmic in the shade, mildews in time of rain and succumbs to drought. Natures which do not greatly thrive even when coddled under glass remain ever innocent of the “great transgression,” not by reason of conviction, but by lack of vigor.

It is one of the hopeful signs of the present day that included in its catalogue of virtues are qualities which were once viewed askance, just as the seed catalogue lists as desirable plants such one-time weeds as asclepias and wild carrot, which the seedsman calls “Queen Anne’s Lace.” Some day even the dandelion may come to its own. So in recent times there has been a complete redistribution of masculine and feminine virtues. If qualities leading to prominence in all departments of life are now conceded to woman, no less are certain feminine graces demanded of the man. If the day of the business woman is in its twilight at least its noon will not soon be forgotten. Always, no doubt, there will be qualities distinctive of each sex which neither can share with the other unless the woman is to become masculine and the man effeminate. But the old metaphor of the “sturdy oak” and “the clinging vine,” usually of a parasitic variety, is out of date. Independence of thought and action, originality in manner and custom, right to make new social and civic contacts, business and professional industries outside the domestic garden, all these are woman’s new prerogatives. This does not mean that to stay at home and mind the children is now the whole duty of man. It does mean, however, that the home is no longer to be regarded merely as a daily point of departure or evening rendezvous, but as a laboratory calling for never-ceasing experiments in unselfishness, or as a garden for the cultivation of patience, cheerfulness, loyalty and self-control. Traits that are obnoxious and which we associate with weeds often obscure qualities that are priceless. If by cultivation thorns can be eliminated from the cactus, character by training may eliminate its weed-like properties and this will be done mainly by diverting that vigor which displays itself in the form of arrogance and self-assertiveness into channels productive of usefulness no less than of sweetness and beauty.

Peter patting his Lord on the back and saying, "Cheer up," is a thistle admonishing a rose; Peter glowing with Pentecostal fire is a morning glory, and a once rampant self-confidence now humbly twines around a trellis of faith. "Overcome evil with good," says the Old Testament wise man; "Make the mammon of unrighteousness friendly to yourself," says the New Testament wise man. The thought is the same, the enemy is best subdued not by his extermination but by converting him into a friend. We are only beginning to sense this fact, seeing beauty in the mullein and finding an antidote for poison ivy by extracting the oil from golden rod. So even originality of thought, once so anathematized by organized religion, is coming to be regarded as the only possible redemption from triteness and banality, and righteous optimism holds out the promise that the honorable conduct of public affairs, which has so long been running wild in the fields of politics, may ultimately be reclaimed for the garden of altruistic statesmanship. It may also become apparent that all racial antipathies, social snobberies, class prejudices and sectional bigotries are but the Monroe Doctrine of timid souls who would keep the little gardens of private industries free from all potential rival climbers or trailers. The national garden of to-morrow will not be a nursery for fearful and feeble folk, but an arena for venturesome souls who will dare to think moral problems through to a sane conclusion, reclaiming some mislabeled weeds and discarding sickly virtues, determined to find the value that lurks under every experience under the conviction that "all things work together for good" and that everything is for the garden.

Even the most superficial perusal of our textbook, the seed catalogue, will at once disclose the fact that it is an idealist whose cheerful visions are quite unaffected by low-minded thermometers. In selecting only attractive models the illustrating artist was doubtless compelled to reject many applicants for the position because deficient in size and color. Such could have no place in this art gallery of heroic achievement, for the artist is a perfectionist and the specimens he portrays must be both speckless and flawless. No "mad artist" is he to depict the battle scars left by insect assaults, the blights of late frost or the ravages of wind and weather. That such accidents occur is suggested by the listed remedies for their relief or cure but the artist is not so crude as to feature these mishaps by means of any three-color process. This is not deception, but common sense. The health resort does not keep a medicine chest on the counter where guests are

required to register nor does a trained nurse act as door-keeper. The catalogue, with similar naïveté, keeps the garden's possible misadventures in the background where they belong and heralds only victories. The scandals of the garden may be learned by consulting almost any book in the library of garden literature.

It is, however, this apparent exhibition of perfection as the norm running counter as it does to the bulk of practical experience which has shaken to a large degree our faith in the idealist. Tested by real life which has not been retouched by the imagination, these chromos of the idealist are copies of nothing actual but only the skillful representation of subjective illusions, a mirage which may lead the credulous gardener through a maze of laborious occupations and leave him at last gazing disconsolately upon a heavily manured plot of ground, spaded four feet deep, but producing only despondent herbs. There is a realism, no doubt, that obscures reality. Is not this the standing indictment against the billboards that mar the scenic effects of the landscape that bounds our highways? Nature's pictures are hideously marred by graphic portrayals of utilitarian objects. Of course we will look with some complacency on the pictures of those articles in whose production we are interested to the extent of a few shares of stock even if they do obscure a bit of woods or hide a clump of sumach. It makes all the difference in the world whether the billboard reminds us of a good investment or of some disagreeable necessity, like a spark plug. Anyway, protest is useless since the billboard is simply a proof of the truth of the old proverb that "Chickens will come home to roost." We must believe that even the commercial advertiser was once an innocent little boy who listened carefully to all the teacher had to tell him about the importance of "the eye-gate." He there received a lasting impression which in maturity ripened into the conviction that people will look at anything. If the object is persistently and alluringly exhibited they will stop and look. It is the advertiser's prayer that they may finally "stop, look and listen." Picture writing is very ancient. Not to go back to the hieroglyphs, the knight-errant, like the modern motorist, usually rode too fast to read runes, but by glancing at a heraldic device he could instantly size up an antagonist together with all his relatives-in-law. His own emblazoned coat-of-arms challenged any likely opponent to use his "little eye-gate" and get busy. When commerce laughed the knight-errant off the map it kept the billboard.

Another illustration of realism obscuring reality may be found in the moving picture. To be sure the motion picture is a long hop, skip and jump ahead of the nursery picture book where: "A is for apple, so juicy and read; B is for baker who makes us our bread," but the idea is the same. It would be foolish to deny the recreational value of the motion picture, but picture stories may convey different morals to different minds and it is unfortunately easily possible to put a question mark after their educational value. There may be adults who can see the tragedy underlying adroit criminality, but not so many, and no children. If the educational value of the motion picture lies in the intention that "he who reads may run," then the child will quickly learn to read and will then run to do likewise. There are some really magnificent motion pictures and very many are innocently amusing, but superlatives are not the norm anywhere and the picture stories that are open to censure are those which abound in false emphases holding up life with a realism that obscures reality. The picture story of this type keeps the prodigal in the "far country" with close-up views of the swine. It is now possible, through the "talkies," even to hear the pigs squeal. The hero and heroine swim through a sewer and emerge on the other side immaculately clothed in the latest style and without misplacing a hair. Small wonder if the infantile mind draws from such pictures the inference that one who sneers at propriety and glorifies vulgarity is only deserving of applause.

Among such pictures of crude realism the visions of the idealist are not to be classed. The idealist glimpses and describes the best man has done, which will also be the visualizing of the best that man can do despite the usual failures and shortcomings which are the common sum of his efforts. The realism of the idealist does not obscure reality, it proclaims it. Christ is not an impossible ideal but a historical character who holds out to mankind as a practical destiny the reproduction of his image. Though himself "speckless and flawless" he is not therefore removed to the sphere of the inimitable, for while no artist can, at present, adequately portray the beauty of that life, still it stands written, "We shall be like him." High idealism is always to be welcomed whether we find it in scripture, in human life or only in a seed catalogue. From a remote past come the words: "Whatsoever things are true, honorable, good, pure, lovely, held in high esteem, think on these things."

The conclusion of the matter is that idealism in some form is the only

sane rule of life. The yellow journal exploits only rotten fruit and on most of its pictures there is some kind of a dirty bug. In happy contrast the gardener is asked to think about perfection. The ideal may occasionally be found, even though it be not as common as the optimist would have us suppose. The most cultivated imagination has never visualized anything finer than nature has somewhere, sometime, actually produced. It is the genius of humanity that it can recognize a fine ideal long before its material counterpart has been run to earth. The jeer at the idealist for cherishing visions which a bungling world does not realize has its source either in indolence or stupidity. A garden in which thorns and thistles run riot proclaims neglect, not the futility of industrious cultivation. It is only fair, however, to enter this caveat, that the word idealism may of course be used only as a screen under whose shadow it is possible interminably to loiter in lazy somnolence, justifying such inactivity by the time-worn maxim: "The best or nothing." Since the "best" is admittedly elusive the only possible alternative will be "nothing." A possible good is a goal preferable to an impossible best. The "best or nothing" motto is apt to be only a hypocritical pose. The moments when we are at our best and can do our best are few. Even a garden of which we have no reason to be inordinately proud may represent labors that have been worth while. Before giving an unqualified commendation to idealism it will be thus necessary to be assured of the worthiness of its ideals. Turning back to the catalogue, it might be an easy inference that the ideal of garden products is found in magnitude. Large value seems to be attached to size. Mammoth proportions are jubilantly claimed for fruit and flower. If any variety fails of giant proportions compensating virtues are mentioned with an insistence that suggests an apology for the pigmy stature. It is easy to confuse bigness with greatness. The ideal for a flower or even a fruit cannot be expressed in terms of inches. Thus a certain variety of daisy is commended by the seedsman on the ground that its blossom is from five to seven inches in diameter and a poppy measuring ten inches in diameter is lauded to the skies. Maybe these measurements indicate magnificent bloom; maybe they only describe a monstrosity. Who wants a carnation the size of an automobile tire or an apple the size of a pumpkin? "To every seed its own body." Any one who has ever been hit on the head by a falling black walnut will appreciate the excellence of nature's judgment in not giving it the body of a cocoanut. Size is no standard of

excellence. Rome, which impressed her laws upon subsequent civilizations; Athens, which bequeathed to the world eternal standards of beauty; Jerusalem, from which came a form of religion and a system of ethics that still dominate human thought; all these were small cities judged by square mileage or population. It is their influence upon the life of the world that has made them great. How future historians will rate New York City is a matter of interesting speculation. Will its vast dimensions, its teeming population, its gigantic buildings, its crowded thoroughfares, its multifarious industries define it as a big city only, or will its just and efficient government free from graft, its public schools unhampered by politics, its liberal patronage of all that makes for the highest culture of body and soul give it rank as a great city? The answer must depend on what ideal of excellence is selected and this will either enshrine loyalty to those virtues which the age-long experience of mankind has demonstrated to be worthy to be held in reverence, or it will exhibit a colossal egoism whose symbol will be the seven-inch daisy or the ten-inch poppy. It is human to be prouder of a big achievement than of a great one, possibly for the reason that the former can be measured and reduced to statistics and the latter cannot. The seed catalogue is aware that the gigantic will always have its attraction but it also realizes that the diminutive has its charm. The former is something to glance at with curiosity, the latter is something to cherish as a friend. The great heart of David sings on long after the big body of Goliath has turned to dust.

After devoting the bulk of its pages to "that which is natural," which of course is "first," the catalogue dedicates a section so small that it is liable to be overlooked to "spices and plants with aromatic perfume." Perfume is nature's nearest approach to the spiritual. "There is no tongue or speech, its voice is not heard," simply a fragrance which even the clever artist cannot depict. The Occident is too catarrhal to be a connoisseur in perfumes, it is in the Orient that they are most highly prized. Here in the West pungent odors seem to be in high favor. That rare American blessed with a keen sense of smell may usually be detected by the invariable question: "What is that frightful odor?" A defective olfactory sense is one of our limitations for which it would seem we have reason to give thanks. And yet this blunted sense is really depriving us of great enjoyment. "Every garden," says the catalogue, "should have its bed of spices." As fragrance and beauty do not always go together this bed may be placed in

an obscure spot to which, however, the nose of the blest will be an infallible guide. In truth this fragrance is the crowning glory of the garden. "Awake, O north wind, and come thou south and blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out." In such an outflow of sweetness is the subtle aroma of personality. The greatest experience the gardener can make is to inhale the fragrance of the completed task into which he has put his best. Man's greatest contribution to the world of his day will be what he is rather than what he has done. Not a work that can be seen, handled and tabulated, but an influence invisible, intangible, proceeding from a character which is the finest product of experience. Paul saw life at its best as a basket of fruit, and handling each gently he murmurs their names: "Love, joy, peace" and many others. Jesus saw life at its best as a garden of spices whose perfume should flow out in fragrant benediction through the ages of ages. This is the essence of "the beauty of the Lord our God" which in the course of our gardening for experience may "come upon us."

The End of Our Time¹

REVIEWED BY JOHN A. MACKAY

NICHOLAS BERDYAEV is one of three contemporary religious thinkers who are acutely aware of the tendency toward spiritual nihilism which is inherent in modern civilization. The other two are Albert Schweitzer and Karl Barth. Albert Schweitzer is supremely concerned about the problem of culture. Believing that to-day there is no such thing as culture in the true sense, he harks back to the Enlightenment in search of a fresh start. The interest of Karl Barth is centered in the problem of the authoritative Word of God amid the flux and relativity of things. His theology of the Word has its roots in the Reformation. The interest of Berdyaev is in the problem of man, whose essence he sees being disintegrated before our eyes. In some of the principles and conditions existent in the Middle Ages, he finds a clue to the solution of his basic problem of man's rebirth.

By the "end of our time," Berdyaev means the end of the Renaissance period, that great humanistic, homocentric period which, he maintains, is now reaching its final sunset phase. His thought is of the most radical order. What he sees to be passing away is man himself, man who has progressively tried to free himself from God and the eternal order, affirming his autonomous personality against the universe. Modern man, tired, lonely, derelict, uprooted, satisfied with any collectivism that comes along, having broken with the spiritual depths which made the Renaissance period possible, stands before us a rifted, shattered soul. Says Berdyaev, "The rift in the soul of man is the theme of modern history."

Two great thinkers of last century sounded the doom of modern man. He died in the thought of Nietzsche in the form of abstract individualism; he died in the philosophy of Karl Marx in the form of abstract collectivism. The outlines of human personality become indistinct. Human liberty and rights become academic questions. In modernist art, neither man nor nature has true form. The dominant philosophy of Phenomenology, associated with the name of Husserl, is profoundly suspicious of man and goes beyond him in search of a basis for thought. Theosophy

¹*The End of Our Time.* By Nicholas Berdyaev. New York: Sheed and Ward, \$2.25.

dissolves man in astral whirlpools. In modern socialism, he is reduced to an economic category. Why should this have happened? "Because man without God is no longer man," answers our author.

For such a thinker as Berdyaev, the idea of progress as commonly understood has become quite meaningless. There can be no such thing as progress and development in a straight line. What modern life and thought need is not length and breadth but depth and height. In the new creative twilight, the new dark age which is settling down upon the world, man must relate himself once more to the eternal. He must acquire true spiritual life, recovering the discipline and other values born of asceticism.

In this our time, Berdyaev senses the presence of a new cosmic atmosphere, a new will to religion. But the new religious drive is taking place in two diametrically opposite directions. One road leads toward the transcendent God and the rediscovery of that spiritual reality called the church. The other leads to absolute devotion to what Paul Tillich would call demonic forces, that is, a series of relatives which have become absolutized as ends in themselves. We might thus interpret Berdyaev's thought. The great spiritual conflict which has to be waged is between the God-man and the man-God, between the revelation of God in a man, on the one hand, with all that that means for personal values and freedom under the Lordship of God, and on the other, some form of collectivism, whether rooted in class or race or geographical frontiers, which assumes the prerogatives of God with all that that involves for the enthrallment of the human individual by the human group. A terrific spiritual conflict is thus pending.

To read such a book as this understandingly, is to say farewell to many illusions which are dimming our spiritual vision and inhibiting creative action. Its reading gives an appreciation of the fact that there is no such thing as an emerging world culture to which Christianity must adapt itself. It points to the need of slowing up many of our religious activities in the interests of depth and clear insight into the meaning of life. It invites us to be so radical in our thinking that we shall challenge many of those axioms of our modern outlook which hitherto we have taken for granted, which have been as the eyes through which we have seen everything, but which we have never examined in a mirror. It produces in us neither optimism nor pessimism but a calm realism with which we once more confront God and man and the mystery of life.

Book Reviews

Teaching Religion To-day. By
GEORGE HERBERT BETTS. New
York: The Abingdon Press. \$1.25.

At a time when the inevitable reaction against a superficial social gospel is driving large numbers of ministers toward a mysticism in religion which quite detaches itself from environing realities, *Teaching Religion To-day* offers much-needed counsel.

Let no minister regard this merely as another text book for the lay-worker in the church school. Even though familiar theological phrases are not rehearsed, one can scarcely fail to sense a deep religious passion finding expression in this volume, united with a sturdy readiness to grapple with practical issues so lacking in the more philosophical approach. The book presents a fresh and stimulating interpretation of a major phase of the preacher's task.

Doctor Betts rests the case for religious teaching upon far more substantial grounds than the classical affirmation that "all men are instinctively religious." Rather in man's need for security, for hope, for an underlying purpose in living and the power to control conduct in accord with a standard of values is the reason for teaching religion to be found. An overview of the present situation in which organized Christianity finds itself, throws into bold relief some of the factors contributing to "the spiritual lethargy of our day." This analysis lays the foundation for an excellent chapter on "Teaching That Takes Hold Upon Life," in which the criterion whether or not "something happens in the experience

of the learner" is applied to distinguish desirable from undesirable teaching.

Experience, as interpreted in this book, includes not only face-to-face relationships between the person and his physical and social environment, but also those spiritual relationships which involve apprehension of God and of Jesus. Simply, with refreshing candor and exhibiting a fine sense of values, the author suggests the distance between the child's and the theologian's ideas in this latter area, and then outlines procedures by which God and Jesus may become real in the pupil's experience.

At the end of each chapter are suggested projects and a brief but excellent annotated bibliography.

One inevitably compares this book with Doctor Betts' earlier treatment of the same problem in *How to Teach Religion* (Abingdon Press, 1919). The same clarity of analysis and expression appears in both texts. But the present volume goes deeper, is even closer to reality.

Five years ago the author phrased the problem of a conference held at Northwestern University on "The Place of Religion in Shaping Conduct and Character," in this manner: "Is religion as we interpret, teach and practice it to-day capable of motivating life?" The present book appears to the writer to express faith in an affirmative answer to this problem, and to indicate specifically how religious leaders may convert a similar faith into actuality.

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DePauw University.

The Person of Christ. By L. W. GRENSTED. New York: Harper & Brothers. \$3.00.

"THE subject-matter of the science of theology . . . does not include directly the investigation of the nature of reality." In fact, "Theology, as such and without further specification, simply does not exist." "Theology, to be theology, must be specific. In the case of Christianity there is no theology which does not rest directly upon the fact of Christ, developing its implications into a system of thought." It is on these pre-suppositions (pages 135-138) that Doctor Grensted writes this treatise on Christology.

Since experience of Christ is the all-in-all of the book, it can have—as he explicitly asserts in his preface—no set apologetic purpose, in the sense of persuading those who lack faith. The aim is to clarify Christian experience for those who already possess it, by bringing to light what appear to be its truest values. For instance, the endless discussion about the "sinlessness" of Jesus is reduced to its essential by the remark "in the case of Jesus alone this claim to sinlessness has produced throughout the history of his church not a sense of perfection, but a sense of imperfection in his followers. . . . The ideal which he embodies . . . must always set up conflict wherever present" (page 277).

With the various modern Christologies that have attempted to use similar methods Doctor Grensted does not concern himself, but devotes his attention to the sources and (particularly) to the Christological developments of the first Christian centuries. His New Testament scholarship is adequate and generally reliable, even though he speaks of Mark

2. 10 as "an unquestioned part of the Gospel record" (page 114). The gap between the primitive Synoptic data and the Pauline-Johannine thought he closes by treating the Christological formulas of the latter as tentative gropings, which none the less rested on invincible religious facts. And he feels that the developed theology of the conciliar period is to be explained similarly. The means employed by the Church Fathers were often mistaken, but the conclusions reached are sound; what was finally achieved was in large measure a triumph of religion over theology.

BURTON SCOTT EASTON.

General Theological Seminary,
New York City.

Statesmanship and Religion. By HENRY A. WALLACE. New York: Round Table Press, Inc. \$2.00.

By inheritance and experience the author possesses competence and authority in dealing with both phases of his theme. The secretary is the second generation to hold his particular high office, and his record thus far proclaims him to be a real statesman. In his religious life he tells of the influence of the Calvinism of the United Presbyterian Church of his fathers, then in turn, of excursions into student skepticism, study of Roman Catholic mysticism and philosophy, and by this route to membership in a High Church Episcopalian parish in his home city. This process resulted in a faith in the broader teachings and universality of religion as exemplified in the life of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount, in the social passion of the prophets, Amos, Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and in the Christianity of the second and third centuries. He asserts the applicability and pleads for the adoption of the essential

principles of these teachings in the new social order.

Mr. Wallace shows that science and the old economics are changing likewise and predicts major adjustments in these fields, just as in religion. He agrees with Tawney that capitalism is an outgrowth of the Protestant Reformation, and believes that Socialism, Communism and Fascism are developments from capitalism. Sturdy individualism, the concomitant of the Protestant movement, played its part in the accomplishments of the industrial era and in the conquest and exploration of the new frontiers of the passing period. But now, he avers, new motives, new methods and new objectives, both humane and spiritual, are necessary. We need, he says, a "heart trust" even more than we need a "brain trust."

The reference to the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States and the words in Latin, "*Novus Ordo Seclorum*," meaning the "new order of the ages," and its application to the New Deal is pardonable in one high in the councils of the present administration. He, however, qualifies complete approval that "*Novus Ordo*" means the New Deal, by warning that "it will take a more definite recognition of the Great Architect of the Universe" before this nation "is in position to assume leadership among the nations in inaugurating 'the new order of the ages.'" This indicates both the international and religious mind of the author.

The volume points the way in which religion must function in preparing for and maintaining the new co-operative commonwealth of liberty, justice and human brotherhood. It might well become a textbook for study and discussion groups. All persons interested in contemporary statesmanship and religion

should read this book and ponder its implications.

FRANK A. HORNE.

Brooklyn, New York.

Conversion. The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo. By A. D. NOCK. New York: Oxford University Press. \$5.00.

THIS is a contribution of the very first importance to the history of religion in the Western World. Ever since, some six years ago, Mr. Nock contributed to the volume of *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation* his long paper on the hellenistic background of early Gentile Christianity, he has been recognized as a rising scholar of the rarest quality. Since coming to this country to occupy a chair at Harvard, he has continued his welcome contributions to the solution of detailed problems in the same general field; these, however, are hidden away in learned journals and other not very accessible publications, so that it is a pleasure to be presented with the present volume in a form calculated to reach a wider public.

Conversion in this volume means essentially adhesion to a new cult, conversion from one religion to another, rather than such a crisis of personal decision as may take place within the experience of those who have never known any religion but the one in which they were brought up. And what Mr. Nock offers us is a careful study of the nature of the "passage from one god or dream or devil to another" in the Greco-Roman world from Alexander to Augustine. Many instances are examined—the conversion of Romans to Mithraism and the worship of Sarapis and other imported religions, conversion to discipleship in the various philosophic schools, and even conversions

back from Christianity to paganism; but it is in the conversion of pagans to Christianity that the interest of the book centers. The problem is first to understand what was generally involved in embracing a new cult, and then to understand how far conversion to Christianity was parallel to these other cases. "How were religious frontiers crossed in antiquity? What did their crossing involve? And when a man began to take notice of Christianity, how much change in his mode of thinking and living did he imagine that adhesion to it would mean?" We have always felt that the Christian demand for the renunciation of other modes of worship, as well as the Christian emphasis on creed, constituted a certain difference, but we are now offered careful instruction as to how far this difference went.

There is a reserved and even elusive quality about Mr. Nock's style that makes the book by no means easy to read. Nevertheless, he who perseveres will be well repaid.

JOHN BAILLIE.

Union Theological Seminary.

Beyond Fundamentalism and Modernism. By GEORGE W. RICHARDS. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.00.

THIS book is a sign of the times. It witnesses to the deep dissatisfaction which thoughtful men are feeling with the alternatives between which they have often been obliged to choose—an orthodoxy which violates their scientific conscience and a liberalism that can bring no positive assurance. To such an age comes Karl Barth, with his insistence that any satisfying gospel must begin with God and not with man, and be a gospel not of man's discovery but of God's revealing.

President Richards' book shows strong evidence of Barth's influence. The first chapter on "The Essence of the Gospel" begins with the sentence, "The gospel is an act of God to which man must make response." More particularly, it is "a purpose, a promise, and an imperative." ". . . The life that is born out of man's acceptance of God's call is a life of faith working in love with the patience of hope" (p. 3).

This gospel, the author goes on to say, is "not a fund of information which God gives in a special way" (p. 5). Its purpose is "not to reveal things that men are to discover, or to answer questions which disturb and perplex them" (p. 7). It is "not a supplement to the fund of rational or scientific knowledge" (p. 8). It is "not a set of edifying and inspiring truths about life that have come to men through long ages of experience. . . . The gospel is something that God has done and is doing for men, and men in the faith of God's deed become collaborators with him" (p. 12).

This central thought is developed in the succeeding chapters, which deal with the characteristics of the gospel, man's need of it, and its relation to God, to Christ, to nature, to history, to the Bible, to law, to theology, to sin and salvation. A special chapter deals with the gospel in times of crisis. The book concludes with practical counsel as to the way to live the gospel and the hope that faith opens for the good time to come.

With the substance of Doctor Richards' book, one can have only sympathy, since it is a sympathetic restatement of what in every age has been the heart of the gospel. When it comes to the passages which define the author's attitude to the Barthian conception of revelation, one wonders whether, in the effort to emphasize the fact of the divine initia-

tive in the gospel, the contrast between revelation and man's ways of acquiring knowledge is not carried so far as to empty revelation itself of any definite and recognizable meaning. Thus in the chapter on man's need of the gospel, we read: "If there is a way out and a path upward, . . . such must be revealed to us from beyond us, from the side other than man or the world, must be given us by God, whom we cannot reach with the intellect nor control with the will. He approaches men through his word, which comes in the form of a gospel through messengers of glad tidings" (p. 52). But if God speaks to man through the word, with a command to be obeyed, how can that message be apprehended save through the intellect or obeyed save through the will? One cannot help suspecting that, however inadequate in form the old doctrine of natural revelation may have been, it stands for a truth to which Doctor Richards has done inadequate justice. For man is not the author of his own intellect or the creator of his own will. They are gifts given him by God for the very purpose of making it possible for him to apprehend and to embrace divine revelation when it comes. No one has recognized this more clearly or stated it more explicitly than Karl Barth in the last edition of his *Dogmatik*¹ when he writes: "We can understand will and conscience and feeling, and all the other relevant parts of man's constitution (*alle anderen in Betracht Kommenden anthropologischen Orte*) as possibilities of human self-determination, in order then to understand these as conditioned in their totality through the word of God, which is addressed to the whole man" (p. 211). This truth, essential as a basis for the positive statements which constitute Doc-

tor Richards' interpretation of the gospel, is in danger of being obscured by the sharp contrast between revelation and all other ways of acquiring knowledge with which the book begins.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN.
Union Theological Seminary.

Elemental Religion. By L. P. JACKS.
New York: Harper & Brothers.
\$1.50.

This is a book on *what* we have to preach rather than *how* to preach. It will recall to some of us an incident that is told of Ruskin. A friend burst in upon him at his work with "Have you heard that we can now talk to India by telegraphic cable?" Without looking up, Ruskin countered with a question, "What will you say?" It is possible that the message is as important as the method. The Lyman Beecher Lectures have borne a rich harvest of golden helps on the "how" of preaching. We are now grateful for any word on the "what" to preach.

What we must say is not an ingenious gadget which we invented. It is "the burden of the Lord." He has put the word in our mouths. The Christian faith, at least, is something "given." The mind and the mercy and the will of God are in it. This is the word of cheer for our difficulties. The gospel is not another question, but the answer. It is not an achievement of the human mind, but the revelation of the Eternal. Therefore *sursum corda*! Pascal heard God say to him, "Thou wouldst not have sought me unless thou hadst already found me." We are not on our own errand here, but on God's. We can appeal to men because we are his children, and we have our Father's word for them.

Our equipment is not first in an art of

¹ *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, München, 1932.

saying things, but - in "a first-hand acquaintance with Deity." (Emerson.) It is this that makes the preacher a revealer of the life of God.

"The only religion whose future is precarious is the religion which rests upon hearsay; perhaps it would be no great loss to the world if our fears for *that* were fulfilled."

The chapter on "The Preacher and the Rising Generation" reminds us that the difficulties of religion are not problems, which are cleared up by thinking alone, but challenges addressed to our wills. "The end of doubt is an action." (Aristotle.)

Two sermons on "The Holy Ghost" and "The Holy Catholic Church" are added to the Beecher Lectures. These will be of interest to some readers, because they were preached in Liverpool Cathedral, and have raised some ecclesiastical dust in England.

This book is like a fresh wind on any hot homiletic brow.

GEORGE ARTHUR FRANTZ.

First Presbyterian Church,
Indianapolis, Indiana.

Contemporary American Literature and Religion. By HALFORD E. Luccock. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Company. \$2.00.

LUCCOCK is unusual. In this book he not only is, but *does* the unusual. Indeed, this is the word that will not down in thinking of this book. Other words rush to mind. One could call it important. But it is more important than "important" indicates. One could call it brilliant. It is all of that! But other books are that without setting up any such ado in the mind as does this one. One could call it indispensable. That it surely is! To miss reading this book is not only to persist in ignorance,

but to risk the curtailing of one's usefulness. But unusual is the word one is forced back upon. For nothing like this has ever been undertaken before! Even if it had occurred to others, not many of them would have been willing to pay the price required for its writing. The labor involved was colossal! Twenty years or more of wading through book after book of fiction, criticism, poetry, drama! Imagine the mental suffering a man of Luccock's healthymindedness must have endured for the kingdom of heaven's sake! The perseverance of the saints had nothing on him!

The book is so interesting that it is hard to put it down once one starts on it. Beginning with "the morning after an earthquake" one catches a glimpse of "post-war realism" and looks through the "American picture album." One is next confronted with "realism in account with religion." "The disillusionment and futility" of our writers is then revealed, after which one encounters "social discontent and protest" (a particularly strong chapter). With "trends in criticism" (the chapter most needed by the most of us) and "the search for God" the book comes to a close.

Luccock's sense of proportion is everywhere in evidence. He does not waste time defining religion. He takes it for granted that his readers already have some notions of that; indeed, are likely to have a fair share of cosmic concepts. What he sets out to do is to sharpen the religious perspective. "The mind of traditional religious people has been oriented to sentimentalism by the nature of much of the preaching to which they have listened. For much preaching has been sentimental in the primary sense that it has been more concerned with creating the greatest emotional effect on the

audience than with the discovery of the real truth . . .” This observation is a bit too modest. Why confine it to the *traditionally* religious? Do not the many cults go in for this pleasant pastime with ardor and deliberate intent? Nevertheless, this book aids “the discovery of the real truth” by letting us in on the sentiments contrary to, and contradictory of religion. Then there is another service rendered by this book in its unique attempt to exhibit contemporary literature in the light of religion. We need not be so afraid of “the big bad wolf” (current authors) as we supposed. They carry within them their own seeds of destruction. Their prejudices dominate their estimates of value. This is what made their “realism” so fantastic. Self-complacency was their drawback. It is one thing to write with conviction. It is another to parade the superiority-complex. A measure of modesty is the first requisite toward realism. Their failure to have this was and is their undoing.

Has the book no shortcomings? Of course it has. Luccock is a trail-maker. He could not be expected to lay a cement road. But the marvel is that he almost did! That the man thought to do it, and had the patience to do it so amazingly well, that is what matters, and that is what elicits our applause! His sentences hold us up at the point of enormous ideas. Not all his statements are of equal merit. Whose statements are? But his batting average is high. And he makes several home-runs, the while his game makes history. Luccock’s book teaches us to read contemporary literature “with unbandaged eyes.” If a more telling service to religion has recently been rendered, the news has not got out!

JOHN M. VERSTEEG.

Walnut Hills-Avondale Church,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Creative Men. Our Fathers and Brethren. By WILLIAM FRASER McDOWELL. New York: The Abingdon Press. \$2.00.

HERE speaks a man who has earned the right to speak as a representative man. In a creative way he has lived through one of the vital periods of American church life. In an intimate fashion he has shared with the lives of that group of men who have largely guided the direction of contemporary Protestantism. Through one of America’s most notable ministries he has stressed the intellectual and spiritual essentials which are the common needs of all men. He is to-day the true preacher whose goal is man-making, man-mending, man-building.

Here he essays an interpretation of a phase of contemporary Christianity by looking at some of the personalities who have been bishops in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Most of the men of whom he writes he knew as colleagues and loved as friends. He does not attempt a series of definitive biographies. He endeavors to give an interpretation of the spirit that lies at the heart of the Methodist movement.

Here is no formal justification of the institutional organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Here is an appraisal of the validity of the type of expression that religion has brought through this communion. Here is a picture of those phases of life that may be seen by one who looks with discerning eye at the “Fathers and Brethren” of Methodism. “We shall come at last to see in its personalities the true temper and purpose of the strange thing called Methodism” (p. 15).

Here is a frank facing of the tradition

of the Methodist movement. Organized religion in its denominational form is not popular to-day. Perhaps the real reason for this is because we are so largely a traditionless people. We do not have a sense of being rooted in a deep past. We are endeavoring to escape our history. But there can be no absolute divorce between our yesterdays and our to-day. In our effort to build a competent church for our day and all days it is worth while to note that Francis Asbury and the first bishops in our Church "were not making a new ecclesiasticism but trying to create a spiritual agency, a society of redemption in Christ's name for the world of men. Those earliest bishops were not primarily ecclesiastics. They were primarily evangelists. And they were general superintendents, not simply that they might go everywhere, travel at large through the connection, but that they might keep all of the Church's life permeated with the one Spirit" (p. 31).

Bishop McDowell does a great service in pointing out the vital relation between the itinerary and the episcopacy. In the Methodist tradition you cannot *successfully* have the one without the other! Certainly as we move with a sense of history into an appreciation of our Church we shall come to have a high regard for the presbyterial theory of the episcopacy. This is democratic in procedure and has the dignity of permanence.

It is probably in the appointing power that men and churches are most restive concerning our episcopacy. Men focus on episcopacy in their thinking and do not measure as realistically the itinerancy. Look at the way the matter works out. Watch an Annual Conference cabinet at work. "It is not a piece of mechan-

ism. It is a ministry, a ministry in Christ's name. For these hours the itinerancy is centered there. After a little experience one discovers that by far the largest percentage of what is called the appointing power must be used and will be used to keep men from dropping and churches from being hurt. Nowhere else in all our system or in all our life is it so clear that we are members of one another. If this brotherhood be broken or strained by any false or unworthy act, no other is left in this kingdom of our souls. What is done there is not done to save the episcopacy nor the itinerancy, but as part of the Church's redemptive purpose to save the world" (pp. 111-112).

Here is a basis for the office of the episcopacy. In the Methodist fellowship it is not an order but the consecration of an elder to a special and vital work. The office should be kept great. The very manifoldness of the work of the episcopacy is not generally appreciated. In this series of pictures one gets a panoramic view of the variety of interests to which our bishops give leadership.

Here is a book written in the best of Bishop McDowell's flavor and it closes with his own personal confession of confidence in the Master. "Really, we cannot strike our everlasting Yea or pronounce our real Amen unless we come clear up the steep heights and look Jesus Christ straight in the face" (p. 213). Every Methodist minister, not to mention the laymen who carry the thought of their Church at heart, ought to let this book speak its message. Read it!

OSCAR THOMAS OLSON.

The Wilmette Parish Methodist
Episcopal Church, Wilmette, Illinois.

Bookish Brevities

LITERARY taste is not merely a distraction or an accomplishment. Literature, instead of being an accessory, is the fundamental *sine qua non* of a complete living.—Arnold Bennett.

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Dr. Frederick W. Norwood, minister of City Temple, London, the most influential nonconformist church in Great Britain, after a highly successful round-the-world pilgrimage, chiefly in the interest of international good-will, is to spend the summer preaching and lecturing in America.

.

Mr. Harry Hansen was for six years the literary editor of the *Chicago Daily News*. He is now the literary editor of the *New York World-Telegram*. He conceives his function to be at times a critic, at times an interpreter and at other times merely an announcer. In a newspaper, he contends, there should be no reviews of the following character: (1) abstruse discussions of idea-content; (2) one-sided valuations from an economic bias; (3) reviews demanding a glossary and technical vocabulary; (4) reviews three to six months after publication; (5) elliptical reviews, in which the part is criticized and the effect of the whole ignored; (6) reviews addressed to specific minorities, such as authors, publishers and fellow reviewers.

Surcharged with common sense as are these negatives in newspaper reviewing, they become suggestive of positives in reviews readers have a right to expect from RELIGION IN LIFE.

The *New Republic* publishes a symposium upon "Good Books That Almost Nobody Has Read." John Dos Passos, Edmund Wilson, Sinclair Lewis, Conrad Aiken and Thornton Wilder are among the contributors. Many are the books they name which out of the over-bright glare of publication publicity have hastened down the chute into oblivion.

Conrad Aiken, a Pulitzer prize-winner, confides this comment: "May I suggest for your list of neglected books, a novel by myself called *Great Circle*, which had a sale of twenty-six copies in its second half-year, and *Preludes for Memnon*, which I think is my best book, and which has sold about seven hundred copies in three years."

Lists of religious books which have never reached the people who would like and profit by them, the people for whom they were written, would be interesting. Writers have been heard to say that through long struggling years they painstakingly sought to write what the people should read until in disgust they produced what the people wanted and reached popular success. It is reminiscent of one of the most moving episodes in the famous Negro play, "Green Pastures," where the Lord is portrayed as disheartened by the behavior of his children until he repents of their creation.

As a literary mood it is debilitating and rarely productive of anything good.

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The Rev. Edgar Franklin Romig has done more than anyone else to convey to the Protestants of other communions the invigorating traditions of the Dutch Reformed Church. He is the author of a

beautiful volume—*William the Silent*—which is issued as a record of the commemoration of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of the hero whose name it bears.

Subsequent history has obscured the unpayable debt which the world owes to the sturdy burghers of the little land of dykes and windmills for whatever freedom from political and ecclesiastical tyranny it possesses. One of the remembered events of history is that England by its revolution of 1688 won opportunity for its middle classes a century before the rest of Europe. It is commonly forgotten that a century before, Holland began to win a similar fight under the dauntless leadership of William, Prince of Orange. When his followers were menaced with violent death, men by the sword, women by being buried alive, and both by fire, William, from 1566 to 1584, prepared for the victory which was consummated in 1648. Under the sheltering hospitality of these achievements, from 1609 to 1620, the Pilgrims fostered the convictions of freedom which they brought to America.

Obstinately, England and Holland contended for primacy in commerce. The latter country did not possess the territory or the population to sustain the competition, as was indicated by her surrender of New Amsterdam in 1664. Holland became a secondary power, but Holland can never lose the luster of her primacy in leading the fight with indescribable sacrifices for human emancipation. Of that triumph, Doctor Romig's book is a worthy recognition.

Liberals, Fundamentalists and In-betweens have happily united to commemorate the centennial of Charles H.

Spurgeon. Unawakened to independent thinking by any school training, he took over the theology of John Calvin. The absence of a vital appeal in some of the logic of that theology led him into controversies which shadowed with bitterness the twilight hours of his abbreviated life.

The strength of Spurgeon was in his assimilation of the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This he could communicate by a voice that was like an organ and a diction that had the directness and terseness of Bunyan. It was not merely that he spoke each Sunday to some ten thousand people, nor that his sermons, numbering nearly four thousand, reached a sale of one hundred and fifty millions. It was that he brought a sense of reality to multitudes, whose lives were elevated with a sense of the presence of God.

Appropriately, Dr. George W. Truett of Dallas, Texas, has been the representative of America in the commemoration. His immense marble church is the spiritual home of 6,500 members. In that church is none of the traditional and sanctified dreariness which Sinclair Lewis alleges to be characteristic of Southern church life.

An intelligent believer in religion cannot but wonder at the finality with which these popular writers speak of religion while disclosing no evidence that they know whereof they speak.

The Coming Struggle for Power, by John Strachey, is a vivid description of the inevitability of the evolution of a malign capitalism into a beneficent communism. It is put forth as an impenetrable piece of logic, albeit a reader has the suspicion that the conclusion was chosen before the argument was begun.

Mr. Strachey holds that in the social-

ization of life Catholicism has gained in intellectual prestige and in temporal power, while Protestantism is in a rapid and obvious decline. As men become rational, they cease to be capable of belief, in his opinion.

To demonstrate the impossibility of religious belief for the educated man of to-day, the traditional claims of religion as formulated by Freud are cited. Dogmas of religion deserve to be believed, because (1) our primal ancestors believed them; (2) because we possess the proofs handed down to us from that period of antiquity; (3) because it is forbidden to raise the question of their authenticity.

Is there a reader of **RELIGION IN LIFE** who has ever heard religion presented upon such claims of authority? Would the brilliant writer of this book comprehend a reply that ours is a religion of the spirit?

An invitation to a reception at the magnificent Olin Memorial Library of Wesleyan University is particularly happy in its citation of quotations.

"I have sought repose everywhere, but nowhere have I found it save in out-of-the-way corners of little books."—Thomas à Kempis.

"What are my books? My friends, my loves,

My church, my tavern, and my only wealth."

—Richard LeGalliène.

"Something very significant has happened to a man when he realizes that in books the greatest souls of the world will come to call on him as though there were no one else on earth whom they had to call upon."—Fosdick.

"The printed word brings to you the best idea, largest experience, soundest

judgment, latest information, and finest instruction in the world as applied to your job. By it you may avail yourself of the brain products of the most successful men in your vocation."—Blackford.

The program of the opening of a branch of the London Library, which was begun almost a century ago by Thomas Carlyle, and other noted authors, carried a quotation less classical but not less pertinent.

"Don't write in the margin, you divil,

All pencilled remarks are taboo.

For, however much authors may drivell,
We want to read them, not you."

.

Stanley Baldwin made the principal address at the opening of this extension to the London Library. He remarked that he, like young Lincoln and all early readers, read books as he lay on his stomach in front of the fire. "Alas," deplored Mr. Baldwin, "that happy posture is no longer possible, since there has come a kind of senile convexity which disturbs the perfect equilibrium necessary to be happy in that position."

"It has always seemed to me," continued Mr. Baldwin, "that perhaps the saddest thing about advancing years is the gradual loss of your contemporaries with all their memories that mean so much in the bond of human friendship. But as they go, surely then in your library there spring to more vivifying life the friendships you have made, the spiritual friendships of every country and every age, and it may well be that as your life draws nearer to its close those voices you heard in youth and young manhood, those you knew and learned to love and follow by hard work, draw nearer to you with more understanding and sympathy than was possible in your younger years."